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D O R A .

BY

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Illustrated by Gaston Fay.

THREE VOLUMES COMPLETE IN ONE.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
90, 92, & 94 GRAND STREET.
1868.



D O R A .

CHAPTER I.

THE autumn wind swept with a long wail over the broad bay of Dublin, then went and died, still moaning, and lamenting, amongst the distant mountains. In its occasional intervals of silence, gusts of rain came and beat against the window-panes with a pitiful, impatient sound, as if claiming to be heard, till the clamorous wind rose again and drowned every voice save its own tempestuous roar. Dusk was gathering in Mrs. Courtenay's bare parlor, and very chill and cheerless as well as bare it would have looked on this evening, if Dora Courtenay had not been standing by the window with her work hanging loosely in her hand, and her eyes fastened on the prospect of sea and mist and cloudy mountains, which was all that she could see through the slanting rain.

Mrs. Courtenay's parlor was, as we said, a very bare one. The chairs, the table, the black hearth, the low ceiling, sadly in need of whitewash, the dull grey paper on the walls, gave it a desolate look: but you forgot that when you saw Dora. No room with a sunbeam, or a Titian, or a Giorgione in it would seem cold and desolate to you were it a garret; and no room in which this girl appeared could fail being brightened by her gay young presence. She was not beautiful, she was not handsome, she was not even very pretty—but she was bright, wonderfully bright. If there were such a thing as brown gold, Dora's hair

might be said to be of that color. If roses ever bloomed on a maiden's cheek, they were to be found on hers. If joy ever beamed in mortal eyes, it surely shone in Dora's. When you looked at her you forgot her half-shabby black dress, her mother's cold parlor—you forgot even that Dora was young, and had a charming figure—you forgot all save the shining hair and the happy eyes, and the genial smile and the young warm voice which matched with them so well; and these you remembered for evermore.

"I can't stand this, you know," suddenly said Dora, flinging down her work; "I must see if Paul is coming."

Mrs. Courtenay, who was gently falling asleep in her arm-chair, awoke with a start: but before her remonstrative, "Don't get wet," was fairly uttered, the bright head and the brighter face of Dora had passed through the parlor door, and the parlor itself looked very much like a cellar whence a sunbeam has departed.

"She is so quick," said Mrs. Courtenay, still amazed and a little plaintive. "I always do feel for hens who hatch ducks' eggs."

This remark was directed to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Luan. Very different of aspect were these two ladies. Mrs. Courtenay was a charming lady of sixty. She had the whitest hair, the mildest blue eyes, the pleasantest smile, and the softest plump hands a lady of sixty ever had. She was French by birth and Irish

by marriage; and she spoke English with a pretty French accent, and French with an equally pretty English accent; and was innocent and delightful in either language.

Mrs. Luan, her late husband's sister, was a square, low-built woman. She had a dull, commonplace face, dingy in color, a dull brown eye with a heavy lid, a low narrow forehead and a thick indistinct utterance. Nature had been very niggardly to this lady, and Fortune had been very stingy to both sisters-in-law. The little cottage in which they resided was one of the plainest near Dublin; their cook and maid-of-all-work was a diminutive girl of thirteen called Peggy, their furniture would not have fetched twenty pounds at an auction. They dressed very simply, made fires at the latest extremity, and, when they were alone, never burned more than one tallow candle.

They were widows, and we dare not say how slender was their joint income. Mrs. Luan had a son whom she had penuriously brought up to his present position of medical student, and Mrs. Courtenay's step-son Paul was an embryo barrister; and then there was Dora to dress and educate. How all this was done, nor yet how far it was done, was one of the miracles which mothers daily accomplish, whilst the world looks on, and takes it all as a matter of course.

Brightness of intellect was not Mrs. Luan's gift. She took time to ponder over Mrs. Courtenay's proposition concerning hens and ducks' eggs, then she said in her thick, hesitating voice,

"Do you think so?"

After having uttered this profound and original remark, she seemed startled at her own daring, and relapsed into sudden silence.

Mrs. Courtenay sighed, turned up her eyes, expanded her hands, and shook her head hopelessly.

"It's no use arguing with her, poor soul," she said, half aloud. "She's so—you know."

This speech Mrs. Luan so far understood, that she made no comment upon it. She took her intellectual inferiority, as she took her poverty and her plainness, for granted. So she remained very quiet in her shady part of the room, thinking of and brooding over her life, after her own fashion.

"I should like a light, Mrs. Luan," said Mrs. Courtenay.

Mrs. Luan replied calmly,

"Candles are a halfpenny dearer in the pound this week."

Mrs. Courtenay sighed—nature had given her a liberal, prodigal heart—but she did not attempt a remonstrance; she remembered, however, her youth in a gay French home, where wax lights were of no account, and where the saloon mirrors flashed like a sheet of light in their brilliant glow, and she sighed again. Mrs. Luan thought, in the meanwhile:

"We burn a candle a night, eight a week, Sundays included. Four times eight thirty-two; five pounds of candles, and two over every month; that's more than twopence halfpenny a month dearer than last autumn. We must light the candle later."

And made happy by this mental calculation, she sat with her hands folded on her lap, content to remain thus, spite the increasing darkness, for the sake of saving an inch of tallow.

"That child will be quite wet," said Mrs. Courtenay, plaintively, after another while; "you should have told her not to go, Mrs. Luan."

Mrs. Luan did not answer, she was accustomed to that too. She was House of Commons in this little household, perhaps because, thanks to her power of management, she held the strings of the purse. Mrs. Courtenay, her constitutional sovereign, snubbed and coaxed her by turns, and blamed her not ill-naturedly, but as a matter of course, for everything;

Dora, her prime minister, tried every now and then to carry it with a high hand; and her son John, and her nephew Paul, twitted and flouted her like saucy young members, and were as helpless as any brilliant minority at the mercy of a stubborn majority ever will be. Mrs. Luan was impenetrable to blame, and coaxing, and ridicule. She was thick-skinned; made armor-proof against all such shafts by provident Nature. With perfect equanimity she now heard herself blamed for Dora's sin, and after awhile she even said, very calmly:

"How hard it is raining!"

"Just like her!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, with gentle exasperation. "She lets the child go out, and then she says, 'How hard it is raining.' You would not let John go, Mrs. Luan."

Now Mrs. Luan, though patient, was, like many a patient animal, endowed with a weapon of defence. This was her voice; a heavy buzzing, indistinct voice, which paused, and stammered, and hesitated, till the conquered listener would buy silence at any price. So, whenever she was driven into a corner, she roused herself, and talked her enemy down.

"I have nothing to do with the rain," she began, in her buzzing fashion.

"Don't," entreated Mrs. Courtenay, becoming alarmed.

But when Mrs. Luan had begun buzzing, who could stop her? Mrs. Courtenay, folding her hands in her lap, let Mrs. Luan go on. This lady from the rain diverged into her husband's last illness; then, having buzzed through that, she made a pleasant diversion into the world of fancy by wondering how people felt when they were dead. Thence she went off to butcher's meat, and having worried her lively little sister-in-law for ten minutes, she kindly dropped her, much the worse for the infliction, and rolled herself back into her habitual citadel of silence, feeling, with the same instinct which had suggested

her system of defence, that she was safe there for the rest of the evening.

In the meanwhile, Dora was standing in a dilapidated summer-house at the end of the garden, watching for her brother's return. The cottage rented by Mrs. Courtenay stood on a narrow promontory of heath, with a road on either side. The front door faced the Dublin road, and the apex of the triangular garden gave egress on another road, long and winding, which looked as if it passed forever through heath and mountain, but which in reality was within five minutes of the railway station. With a shawl around her, and standing within the shelter of the summer-house, Dora, whose look could command the whole sweep of the road through the grated door, watched and waited. But the wind moaned, the rain drifted gustily, the hour at which the train was due went by, and still Paul came not. Night darkened around the mountains, the rain ceased, the wind cleared away a few clouds from the sky, and here and there a star glimmered, and still the grey road showed no tall figure approaching, and echoed to no young firm step. Had anything happened to him? Had there been a railway collision? Had he been waylaid and murdered? But not in vain had Dora bright hair, and happy eyes, and a genial smile. These gloomy, morbid fancies only passed athwart her mind like clouds across a clear sky. She shook her head defiantly at them, and bade them begone.

"I will not believe you," she told them. "Paul has gone, like the knight or the prince in the fairy tale, to the dangerous castle or the perilous wood, and, like him, he will return triumphant. There is no trial Paul cannot overcome; there is no heart Paul cannot win. He was made to prevail and be king. Since he stays so long, 'tis sure proof of victory, and if he comes by the night-train, why, I shall let him in, and none shall be the wiser."

The wind might blow, the rain might fall—Dora, whilst she had such thoughts, could not help feeling happy. She was ambitious, not for herself, but for her brother. She could sit and dream about him, with the tender folly of the young, and never feel that it was folly. There was no success Paul was not to achieve, no destiny was too great for Paul, and thus little by little it came to pass that he was the hero of his sister's life.

That life had been such as most girls lead; a still, narrow path, with a boundless world around it, dangerously alluring. Such as it was, it contented her. She was satisfied with the seclusion which her poverty commanded, with the society of her friends, with studies which to her were no pastimes, but serious pursuits, and with such relaxations as an old cracked spinet and her flowers afforded. All this sufficed her, for she had Paul—Paul who was to be so great a man, the honor and the stay of his family. When a young girl has such a thought as this, it matters little what dresses she wears, or what sort of a house she lives in. She has an enchanted tower, whence she views the nether world with calm indifference. Who dare pity, and who would not envy her, till truth comes and knocks at the door, claiming admittance in a voice that will not be denied?

CHAPTER II.

BUT Paul's journey was a secret as yet, so, with another look up the road, Dora went back to the cottage through the wet garden. As she reached the parlor she heard the voice of her cousin, John Luan, talking within. At once she broke in, bright and joyous.

"Oh, you faithless John, where have you been till this hour?" she cried. "Tell me directly."

A very good-looking young man, with a good-natured face, very like Dora's in all save

its brightness, turned round on hearing this imperious mandate, and looked at his cousin with an unmistakable adorer look. "Slave" was stamped on his aspect, and no less legibly was "queen" written on Dora's.

"I have been dissecting," he began.

"Don't, John," interrupted Mrs. Courtenay, shivering.

"Bless you, mamma," remarked Dora, coolly, "John would dissect us all if he had us."

John had never much to say for himself, but when he fell into the hands of this bright-haired tormentor he became helpless.

"Now, Dora, you know I can't," he said.

"Can't dissect?" she suggested. "Then give up your profession, and let there be an end of it," she kindly added.

A sigh, verging on a groan, expressed John's mental sufferings.

"Take pattern on Paul," she resumed. "He means to be Grattan, or Chatham, or Demosthenes. Why, don't you mean to be something? Now, mamma, please not to interfere. I want to make something of John, but if I am interfered with how can I?"

John groaned again, yet did not seem to be very miserable.

"Yes, I know you would dissect me," said Dora, shaking her bright head; "but you shall not have the chance, you little wretch!"

Dora Courtenay had a graceful young figure, but she was not a fine woman, and John Luan was a remarkably fine young man. Yet little wretch she had called him since they were children, and it was the only part of her teasing which Mrs. Luan could never endure. She now showed such unequivocal symptoms of buzzing, that Dora, much alarmed, rose and said quickly,

"I meant a big wretch, aunt. And now let us have tea, since Paul is not coming."

To make tea was Dora's duty. She began the process by peremptorily ordering John Luan to cut some bread and butter, kindly

adding an admonition concerning the wisdom of pinning a cloth bib-wise before him, and not buttering his coat instead of the bread; after which, the diminutive servant having brought up the tray, Dora sat behind an old-fashioned tea-urn, and looked through the curling wreaths of steam, like a bright young Hebe, with the ethereal vapors of Olympus around her. It was a very plain meal. The tea was three shillings a pound, the butter was Irish butter, and therefore could not be bad, but had it come from a cheese country, John Luan would have found it delicious, and all China could not have matched the flavor of that mild Congou.

He sat and ate through a plateful of bread and butter, and drank through seven cups of tea—looking all the time at that bright girl before him, and meekly enduring such shafts as it pleased her saucy little tongue to pierce him with.

Dora could not help being aware of her cousin's intellectual inferiority, and she was not so perfect as not to take advantage of it now and then. To make up for this, indeed, she gifted him, like a kind fairy, with some imaginary graces. He was good-natured, she made him high-hearted; he was careless of danger, she made him brave; but unluckily she forgot to feel more than a moderate regard for the owner of these virtues. The crown-gift of her affection was wanting.

John needed to use no such magic powers. He had no imagination, and could not conceive another Dora than the one he knew. With her he was quite satisfied. He was in that happy stage of love when to see and hear the beloved object is sufficient bliss to the worshipper. He did not think of marriage. They were first cousins, to begin with, and were by right of birth supposed impenetrable to love. Then they were both as poor as Job; and best reason of all, marriage was not in the least necessary to John's happiness. To see Dora

and look at her bright face, to hear Dora and be worried by her, to obey Dora and eat bread and butter, or do any humble office for the pleasure of that haughty little sovereign, was all John Luan cared for; and as he had but to come to the cottage to secure these blessings, that crown of all bliss, the wedded, was not in his thoughts.

Now this disinterested adoration had been going on five years—his mother, his aunt, Paul, Dora herself, looked upon it as a matter of course, and never gave it a second thought. But a drop will overflow the full cup, and a remark which Dora now darted at her cousin across the table made him blush a little, and caused Mrs. Luan to look first bewildered, then to turn as pale as her dingy complexion would let her. With a deeply-troubled mien she put down her cup of tea untasted, then looked from her son to Dora, and from Dora to her son again. Yet all Dora had said was: "I wish you would not stare, John."

She spoke with a pretty little pettish toss of her head, but something in John's thoughts made him color up to the eyes, and dull though she was, Mrs. Luan was a mother. In a moment she saw that these two were no longer children, and whilst she was measuring the extent of the calamity, Mrs. Courtenay, who had an awkward and innocent habit of thinking aloud, said with her pleasant smile:

"La! my dear, John does not stare; he looks at you, and he looks because he admires you, I suppose."

Which was the exact truth, and, precisely because it was the truth, made John look foolish, brought a sudden glow to Dora's face, and caused Mrs. Luan to pour the contents of her tea-cup into the sugar-basin. This domestic calamity sobered them all save Mrs. Luan herself. But long after the little excitement she thus caused had subsided, John's mother, though outwardly as dull and as calm as ever, was brooding over her discovery.

She was habitually taciturn, and no one saw any change in her this evening. She took out her patchwork, and proceeded with it as usual. This patchwork, which was literally hideous, was however the only concession to fancy which Mrs. Luan had ever made. It was to her what music is to some, and poetry to others. These lozenges of faded silks, three of which being put together formed by their different shades a cube with a very light top, and a very dark side to it, were the only relaxation Mrs. Luan's mind knew or took from domestic cares. She loved them, she was proud of them, she admired them, and felt pleased when they were praised by some polite stranger. She never read books or newspapers; she took no pleasure in news, national or local. The ruin of an empire, or the scandalous elopement of a near neighbor, found her equally indifferent. She could not help this to a certain extent, for she was partly born so; but she had likewise partly made herself so. She had assisted Nature, as we all do, and had not assisted her very wisely—too frequent a case. Thus she had grown into a silent, apathetic-looking woman, whose concentrated depth of purpose no one suspected.

Whilst Dora teased John Luan this evening, and Mrs. Courtenay made little innocent speeches, Mrs. Luan, whom no one heeded, and who seemed absorbed in her patchwork, felt in a strange tumult. Her thoughts, unaccustomed to wander far, centred around this great fact: "John is in love with her." Gradually her circle widened. She saw the pair standing at a church altar, and John's ring on Dora's finger. Then, by a stretch of her slow mind, she imagined a poor lodging somewhere, and John and Dora were in it, fighting the great battle of respectability *versus* poverty, with half-a-dozen children around them. This was the real point at issue, and it was frightful. Mrs. Luan liked Dora very well—as well as she could like a being who

was not John. She felt no maternal jealousy of a daughter-in-law. It would not have grieved her to see John worship Dora with the romantic fancy of a lover, or the yearning tenderness of the fondest husband. Her objection to the first cousinship was of the slenderest sort. She was a woman of few feelings, as well as of few ideas. But the cruel truth was that, if John was poor, Dora was poorer. This was terrible, and nothing could overcome it in Mrs. Luan's mind. The beauty of Helen, the mind of a De Staël, the heart of a Mrs. Fry, the piety of a saint, would have left her alienated, indifferent, and cold. Poverty had early taken and stamped her, and the mark was indelible. She woke to think of money, as she slept to dream of it, not exactly for her own sake, but for John's. She could not give him wealth, not possessing it herself, but she could try and make him acquire it; above all, she could try and not let him fall into such a snare as that of a poor marriage. That he should love Dora, and think of marrying her, was something awful in her creed. Save him she must, no matter how—no matter at what cost. She had no plans as yet; her mind was not an inventive one, but she had a hard, stubborn will, and on that she relied, not without cause. That will had borne her up all her life, and it had borne her successfully through many a trouble. She now resolved that her son should never marry Dora Courtenay. She was prepared to use any means that might prevent him from doing so, and being irremediably narrow-minded, it never occurred to her that Dora might not be in love with John. This narrowness, this inability to take in more than one idea at a time, was the weak point of a character to which tenacity of purpose, and recklessness of all save its own ends, gave dangerous strength, all the more dangerous that it was unsuspected, and was accompanied with marked intellectual inferiority.

In the meanwhile, the pleasant little war

went on between Dora and John. Dora had a skein of wool to wind, and she made John hold it for her. Very meek and awkward looked this Hercules, whilst his Omphale stamped her foot, or shook her bright head at him with an encouraging "Don't be stupid," or a flattering "Oh! dear, if you would but try and be useful, John, and not make me snap my wool so!"

"I do my best, Dora," was the good-humored reply.

Upon which Dora pensively rejoined—

"I wonder what your worst would be like, John?"

Not a word, not a breath, not a motion, not a turn of these two did Mrs. Luan lose. She watched them till all her senses were strained with the effort, and her mind felt so bewildered and confused, that she heard without heeding it the pleasant little chat of her sister-in-law.

Mrs. Courtenay was doing a patience, and though she knit her brows, and looked pensively at the cards spread on the table, she was able to talk.

"I wish you had a new dress, Dora," she said; "you could give this to Peggy."

"Peggy must wait, mamma. When Paul is Demosthenes, he will give me a velvet robe. John, do mind my wool?"

John, who was innocently thinking that velvet could scarcely improve Dora, shook his head like a good faithful dog under the reproof, and, dog-like, was mute.

"I am to have diamond earrings, too," resumed Dora—"Paul says so—beau-tiful diamond earrings, mamma."

Mrs. Courtenay sighed gently. Perhaps she thought the diamond earrings were rather far away. Dora herself thought so too.

"I shall be old by that time," she resumed—"quite old; thirty, at the very least. John, you know, or ought to know, anatomy. Do tell me why people look old. Why do faces get so very odd, you know? It is not only

the skin that changes. How shall I look when I get old?—so?"

She puckered her pleasant genial face into the most extraordinary wrinkles, and made her little mother shiver.

"My darling, how can you? Surely you do not mean to say that old people are so horrid?"

"Oh! no," coolly replied Dora, resuming her natural form and features, "but I shall be so, mamma. Shall I not, John?"

"Don't," he entreated; "don't."

"Don't get old! Do you mean to send me to an early grave, sir?"

Dora was rather fond of shaking her head, and shook it now at the delinquent. So vehement was the shake that her hair-pins got loose, and a shower of rich brown gold locks fell down her neck on her shoulders. Dora blushed a little, and John, lost in admiration, ventured to stretch out his hand, and touch with worshipful timidity one of those beautiful tresses. Dora pulled it from him with a pleasant laugh, and Mrs. Courtenay said,

"Has she not beautiful hair, John?"

And Mrs. Luan put down her work, and in her blind mad terror at what she feared, would, if she could, have destroyed Dora that moment. Hatred she felt none; but it is not hate which works the most evil, or inflicts the deepest wrongs.

Dora soberly put up her hair, and as the evening was well-nigh spent, Peggy was told to go to bed; and Mrs. Courtenay, Mrs. Luan, and John and Dora parted, to follow her example.

CHAPTER III.

"PAUL will come by the night train," thought Dora; so, when that train was nearly due, she softly stole down to the kitchen to make her brother a hot cup of tea. Dora was a clever girl, and a clever woman is expert in everything. It was no trouble to her to light

a fire, and prepare her brother's tea and supper. The event justified her foresight. The water was scarcely boiling when she heard a few light grains of sand thrown against the parlor window. She stole up-stairs, noiselessly opened the cottage door, and got a cordial kiss in the dark for her pains.

"They are all asleep," she whispered; "come down to the kitchen."

A pleasant sight to a weary traveller was that which greeted Paul Courtenay's eyes as he followed his sister down-stairs. The fire was blazing, the water was simmering on the hob, a frying-pan was hissing on the fire, the cloth was laid; a cottage-loaf, butter, and jug of ale were the first instalments of a frugal meal, where fried eggs and bacon were to play the most conspicuous part, and which a warm cup of tea, and that domestic iniquity, hot buttered toast, were to crown.

Poor Mrs. Luan tossing restlessly on your couch, and planning economy in your dreams, where were you then?

Paul Courtenay, a dark, good-looking young man, with a broad beetling forehead, bestowed a gratified look on these preparations, sat down, drew his chair to the fire, rested his feet on the fender, and said emphatically,

"You bright little fairy! What lucky fellow will have you, I wonder!"

"Well, I do think he will be lucky," candidly replied Dora, minding her frying-pan all the time; "only I wonder, Paul, if he will appreciate his happiness."

"He had better do so," replied Paul, with something like sternness.

"Dear Paul!" thought Dora, "I do believe he would defend me to the last drop of his blood."

"Why don't you ask for news?" said Paul.

"No, you must eat first. There, hold your plate, and do not leave a morsel."

Paul obeyed literally. He ate and drank heartily, and soon looked much the better for

the meal his thoughtful little sister had provided.

"And now," said Dora, sitting down at his knee on a hassock which she had brought down for that purpose—"now you may tell me all."

Her bright eyes were fastened on his in eager expectation; her parted lips expressed the very keenness of desire.

"Well, imagine a wild landscape with mountains around it, a grassy park with noble trees, the smoke of a waterfall on your right hand, and on your left a little gray lake with a patch of blue sky; in the distance a plain white house—that is Deenah. When I reached the house an old servant in sober livery showed me into the room where Mr. Courtenay was sitting. I saw a little pale old man, blind of one eye, on whom I should have been afraid to blow, so weak did he seem. He held out his hand, a cold weak hand, and told me in a whisper—'I am glad to see you; but I had a wretched night—I woke at two—sleeplessness is constitutional with me. I had a fall three months back, and some nerve got injured, for when the weather changes I feel a great throbbing and cannot sleep.'"

"Did he ask after mamma or Aunt Luan?"

"He did not. He could not weary of his sleepless night! Yet he also spoke on business. 'You are my heir-at-law,' he said; 'but I did not get my property from my ancestors, and what did not come by inheritance need not go by inheritance. I shall leave you and your sister, and John Luan even, five hundred pounds each, which, as I was not on friendly terms with your late father, and will never see my sister again, is handsome. But then to whom shall I leave Deenah and the rest of the property, which is large—to you or to young Templemore? He was my late wife's nephew, and Mrs. Courtenay brought me a good deal of money; so he, too, has claims, you see.'"

"Let him share his money between you," promptly said Dora.

"Tell him to make two halves of his body," replied her brother, smiling.

"Well, you shall have the first chance," said Mr. Courtenay. What that chance was I learned after luncheon. It was too damp for us to visit the grounds, but Mr. Courtenay—my uncle, I should say—showed me over the house. He went gliding about that great lonely place in felt slippers, like the Italian poet's Sleep, and looking more like his own ghost than like a living man. But a very nice ghost Mr. Courtenay made, I must say. He is small and slender, and neat beyond any one I ever knew. His motions are noiseless, quiet, and graceful, like your cat's, Dora. I could not help admiring the perfection of nicety there is about that insignificant old man. He has made his house like himself, a complete thing; but money has given him the power of acquiring what nature bestows, but never sells, and thence Mr. Courtenay's house is something exquisite. 'You have not seen my curiosities,' he said, 'you must see my curiosities.' He took me to a sort of gallery, with windows on one side, and glass cases on the other. Between the cases were statues, beautiful pieces of furniture, large porcelain or marble vases, and more things than I can tell you of. The evening was coming on, and the room was rather dark. Well, Dora, on that room hangs my fate; through that room I am to grow rich, or to remain poor. That room and its contents will probably decide whether or not your brother shall ever marry Florence Gale!"

Paul looked grave, almost sad. It was plain that he felt by no means sanguine.

"But how—how so?" asked Dora, shaking her bright head a little defiantly.

"Wait and you shall learn. 'This,' said Mr. Courtenay, 'is my hobby, you know. This collection, such as it is, has been valued

at twenty thousand pounds. It did not cost me twenty hundred. You see taste did not run much this way when I travelled on the Continent forty-five years ago. Look at this saucer—' he opened one of the glass cases, and took out one of the most hideous objects you ever saw, Dora—a large round dish, with a green speckled serpent, and horrible little lizards filling the centre. 'Do you know, sir,' he continued, 'how much I paid for this treasure, genuine Palissy, at a *bric-à-brac* shop in Paris, forty-five years ago? Fifty sous, sir. It would be cheap at fifty pounds now. And it is unique—unique! No other Palissy that I know of has *that* kind of serpent.' I cannot tell you, Dora, how he looked as he spoke. The man was transfigured. His one eye shone, his pale cheek was flushed, his very voice quivered. He took me over all his treasures, and explained them to me one by one in the same mood. And when we came to a low glass shade, he stopped with a sort of awe. 'That,' he whispered, 'is my Henri-deux ware—look!' I saw a little pale salt-cellar, with a very fine pattern upon it, a thing for which I would scarcely have given threepence, Dora; well, it seems it is worth hundreds. And there is a mystery about its manufacture, and I am to find out the mystery, though it has puzzled and still puzzles the learned."

"Well, but what about the fortune?" asked Dora.

"Why, this—that if I can write a good descriptive account, a first-rate catalogue of Mr. Courtenay's collection, both collection and fortune are mine."

"Why, then, you are sure of it," cried Dora, with sparkling eyes.

"And pray how am I to write such a catalogue? It would take half a lifetime to acquire the knowledge needed for the task, and Mr. Courtenay would detect the least flaw in my erudition. I shall make the attempt, and respond to his kindness in giving me what he

calls the first chance, but I do not reckon on success."

"But you must succeed, Paul. Mr. Courtenay means you to succeed."

"Mr. Courtenay is a true Courtenay, Dora, honorable and conscientious, and not knowing how to decide between this young Templemore's claims and mine, he has hit on this scheme; but being a true Courtenay, he will abide by the law of his own laying down."

Dora looked thoughtfully at the decaying fire.

"Has John any chance?" she asked.

"None."

"Can I help you with the catalogue?"

"Very little, unless in the way of taking extracts in Mr. Ryan's library; but I am not sanguine, Dora. I feel I shall not succeed, and I feel, too, I shall not marry Florence Gale."

Paul spoke despondently; he was liable to such fits of depression, and they saved him, perhaps, from the ridicule which might have attached to the quiet but obstinate good opinion of himself, and all pertaining to himself, which was his only foible. But the humility of his tone, as he thus gave up all hopes of fortune and Florence, vexed his ambitious little sister. Moreover, by thus placing Florence as a prize beyond his reach, Paul decidedly proved himself mortal.

"You must succeed, and you shall marry her!" she cried, almost impatiently; "she must wait for you, Paul."

"How many years, Dora? We are not engaged, you know. I could not help letting her see that I loved her, dear girl; but she is not pledged to me. I know she could never marry me unless I got rich, and you know," he added, with his grave smile, "I am not the man to elope with a rich man's daughter; besides, I never could tempt a girl to such a step. It is not in the Courtenay blood."

"Suppose I run away," demurely suggested Dora.

"Dora," he said, a little austere, "never jest so. No sister of mine could do such a thing."

"Florence Gale would run away with a lord," thought Dora; "poor Paul, not to know it!"

Again the sense of her brother's blindness came to Dora unpleasantly, and almost remorsefully; for was it not a sort of sin to see it? But then she remembered the heel of Achilles, that type of all heroic weakness, and she was partly comforted. After all, Paul was not bound to be beyond humanity.

"I say you shall marry her," she said again. "It is your right, and you shall have your right, Paul."

"To be sure," he good-humoredly replied; "but it is late, suppose you go to bed. I shall stay here and smoke awhile."

Dora saw he wished to be alone, and she let him have his way. She got up, filled his pipe, and brought it to him; then giving him a parting look on the threshold of the kitchen door, she stole up-stairs with a little sigh. Paul looked very grave, not in the least like a man who has had the chance of a handsome fortune just offered to him.

"He does not expect to get it," thought Dora, as she softly went back to her bed unheard. "Oh! if I could but write that catalogue for him! It is not in his way, and it would be in mine."

Lest this confidence should seem presumptuous in Miss Courtenay, we may as well mention that she had received a solid education, was well read in several languages, and could write very well. From her earliest years she had shared that portion of her brother's studies and pursuits which could interest her. Latin and the law excepted, she knew as much as he did, and some things she knew better than Paul. Their father, a man of rare acquirements, had spared nothing to teach them both, and Dora, he would say sometimes, was

the more brilliant scholar of the two. Dora knew it, in a careless sort of way. As a rule she forgot the depth and extent of her information; but sometimes, too, she remembered it, and she now wondered if she could not render her little learning useful to her brother. She sat up in her bed, thinking of the visit she was going to pay to Mr. Ryan, of the works she must read, of the manner in which she could turn her researches to Paul's advantage.

"He must write that catalogue, and write it well," she thought. "I wish I could see Deenah and the lake, and the gallery, and that wonderful salt-cellar."

These thoughts followed her in her dreams. She saw a green solitude, and a shining lake, and a white house. She wandered in its rooms, preceded by Mr. Courtenay, who, looking on her with his one eye, said in a whisper—

"Don't be afraid, my dear; I am dead, and cannot hurt you."

She followed the noiseless little old man till she came to the gallery, and there she wandered alone, for, ghost-like, he had suddenly vanished. She saw every object her brother had described, and especially did she see Mr. Courtenay's specimen of *Henri-deux* ware. The mystery concerning this rare bit of pottery, dreamed Dora, was to be found within one of its recesses; but unluckily she scarcely had lifted up the glass shade to peep in, when she woke and saw the sun shining in at her window.

CHAPTER IV.

PAUL's godfather, Mr. Ryan, had one of the largest private libraries in Dublin, and to him Dora at once applied for books. She was an especial favorite, and was graciously received, so far as books went, but on hearing of the catalogue Mr. Ryan laughed derisively.

"Paul does not know human nature," he

said, "or he would never believe such a wild story as this. Let him get the five hundred pounds—if he can—and I shall turn them into thousands; tell Paul so."

Mr. Ryan had made a handsome fortune in the Funds, and thought himself an authority in all financial matters. Dora believed in him implicitly, save when he ventured to censure Paul. She did not deny his power of turning five hundred pounds into so many thousands, but she indignantly vindicated her brother's knowledge of human nature, and asserted his prospects of success.

"I am sure Paul will have Deenah!" she said, warmly, "and his catalogue will be a beautiful catalogue; and I hope, Mr. Ryan, that you will let me read in your library, for I want books, quartos perhaps, or in-folios, which I cannot take home. I am to write out all the extracts, you know."

"Yes, yes! you poor little innocent," kindly said Mr. Ryan, patting her on the head, "have your way."

Thus it came to pass that Dora was very busy in Mr. Ryan's library one bright morning, a week after Paul's visit to Deenah, and that Mr. Ryan was reading with her and gently nodding over his book. Mr. Ryan was a happy man, and sleep came easily to him, as most things did, and rather oftener than was needed. It came now insidious and stealthy. The book was dull, the room rather close, and Mr. Ryan's luncheon had been comfortable. Sleep was having it all his own way, and would have prevailed entirely, if the library door had not opened gently, and a very pretty girlish face peeped in with a merry laugh. Dora looked up, and Mr. Ryan awoke with a start.

"Napping—napping both of you!" said the intruder; "and how is that catalogue to be done, eh?"

"I was not napping, Florence," gravely replied Dora; "I was reading."

"Was Mr. Ryan reading too?" shrewdly asked Miss Gale.

Mr. Ryan laughed, and looked admiringly at the pretty creature before him. Paul's mistress was neither short nor tall, neither plump nor thin. Her figure had every charm which nature can give to youth, nothing too much and nothing too little. She stood before Mr. Ryan, dangling her hat in her hand, and smiling down at him in conscious beauty. She was always pretty, but these smiles of hers, which were neither few nor far between, made her enchanting, and she knew it. Seducing is the word that describes her best. Never did softer black eyes beam from beneath more finely-pencilled eyebrows than those of Florence. Her dark hair was glossy and abundant; her teeth were two rows of pearls; her rosy cheeks were full of the most fascinating dimples, and though she was by several years Dora's elder, she looked the younger and the more childish of the two.

"Why were you not reading and helping poor Paul?" she asked, coaxingly, of Paul's godfather; "and why is not Paul here?" she added, turning on Dora, and speaking rather pettishly.

"Paul is not well, Florence."

Miss Gale threw herself into the nearest arm-chair, and exclaimed, petulantly,

"I do think Paul does it on purpose, not to be well just because he has that catalogue to do, and the chance of a fortune to get. I suppose young Templemore will have it; and I wish he may," she added, waxing wroth; "he is my cousin, third or fourth, and I wish he may get Deenah! I do, since Paul does not care for it, and only coddles himself up."

Dora looked at her in a silent indignation, which was wholly thrown away on Miss Gale; while Mr. Ryan remarked gravely,

"Then I suppose you will marry Mr. Templemore if he gets Deenah?"

"Marry him!" exclaimed Florence, raising

her arched eyebrows; "marry him, Mr. Ryan!"

"What! is he so objectionable? Never mind, Deenah will make him fascinating enough."

"But he has got a wife and little girls!" ejaculated Florence. "I told you so the other day—I wish you would not worry, Mr. Ryan."

"Why, yes, it is tantalizing. The little girls would make no difference; but the wife is an objection."

Florence laughed, and Dora, bending over her book, thought with a swelling heart, "It is Deenah she wants. Paul she does not care for. She does not even ask what ails him." But this omission Miss Gale repaired before her departure. After spending half an hour in listening to Mr. Ryan's mingled praise and quizzing—provided she got the one, she had not the least objection to the other—she suddenly discovered that she was wanted home.

"I told papa I was going to see aunt," she said, confidentially, to Dora; "and now I shall have to say that aunt was out. I thought to find Paul here—what ails him?"

"He knocked himself up with working too hard."

"Now, Dora, if you put that into his head, that wretched catalogue will never be done; so pray don't. Good-morning, Mr. Ryan, a pleasant nap to you."

And putting on her little hat, after waving it in mock courtesy to Mr. Ryan, Miss Gale danced out of the room without giving him time to follow her, or even ring the bell.

"The prettiest, emptiest little thing that ever was, eh, Dora?"

But, whatever Dora's thoughts might be, she would not grant Paul's mistress to be less than perfect.

"Florence is too good-natured, Mr. Ryan," she said, indignantly; "she allows you to quiz her! I would not tolerate it!"

"Nor deserve it," politely said Mr. Ryan; "no, no, Dora—I know where the shoe pinches. You cannot understand that Paul should be so smitten with that silly little bird, but you will not confess it. Never mind, my dear. Most young men would be no wiser than Paul is. So we will help him all the same with his catalogue, in order that he may get his pretty Florence. For unless Paul has Deenah, or something very like it, Mr. Gale will never give him his daughter, as we all know."

Dora sighed. Yes, Paul's happiness hung on that catalogue.

Mr. Courtenay was a pitiless collector. He had specimens of everything, or, to speak more correctly, he had collected in every possible direction. Paul had paid a second visit to Deenah, and come back with a list of objects to be described that would have puzzled a Benedictine monk's learning. Etruscan vases and Dutch hardware, Majolica, Indian carving, mediæval armor, old laces, illuminated manuscripts, bewildered Dora, and tried Mr. Ryan's library to the utmost. So she worked hard, and without relaxation, till it was time to go and bid Mr. Ryan adieu.

"I shall go on with that Hydria," he said, "and that antique mask as well. I shall do all the hard work for you, Dora. The rest will be child's play to Paul and you—tell him so."

Mr. Ryan had been "going on" with the Hydria and the antique mask for a week. He was one of the many who mistake a kind intention for its fulfilment. A promise was so delightfully easy. It gratified both his amiability by the prospect of good to be done, and his indolence by its postponement. Dora smiled at his calmly-benevolent tone, and then went her way.

Mr. Ryan's house—and a handsome, pleasant house it was—stood near Phoenix Park. There Dora was to find her brother, who wished to escort her home. He was true to his ap-

pointment, but as he walked towards her Dora was struck with his pale face, and exclaimed, anxiously,

"Paul, you have been working?"

"I could not help it. Do you know, I think that if it was Mr. Courtenay's object to give me a taste for his curiosities by making me write that catalogue, he has been successful. I could not help looking over my notes, and once I had looked I should write."

Dora looked at him with growing uneasiness. Paul was very pale, but his dark eyes burned with a feverish light. Surely he was not ill? surely it was only fatigue that ailed him?

"You know I told you that Mr. Courtenay has a salt-cellar of Henri-deux ware?" resumed Paul, "and that, though he does not expect me to solve the great mystery, he nevertheless wishes me to have a theory on the subject. Well, Dora, I do believe I am on the track—yes, and I think, too, my theory is the right one."

Dora looked at him in great admiration. Of course, if Paul had a theory, it must be the right one, and of course a right theory on Mr. Courtenay's salt-cellar of Henri-deux ware meant triumph. She said so with sparkling eyes. Paul laughed, and shook his head.

"I don't know," he said. "I promised Florence to work hard, and I will."

"When did you see her?"

"This afternoon. Dear girl! she came to tell me her father wants her to marry a Mr. Logan, whom she hates. She was all in tears, but I so promised to work, and be successful, that she was bright again when she left us."

Dora sighed. What availed it that she did all she could to spare Paul, if Florence came and urged him on? But with that menace of a rival it was useless to try and check him. Silly though she was, Florence had an art in which even silly women are expert. She knew how to rule the man who loved her, and Dora was too wise to contend against her influence.

"And so," continued Paul, "I worked hard. I did more. I called on Mr. Gale on my way here."

Dora stood still, and uttered a breathless "Well?"

"Well, I got a diplomatic reply. Mr. Gale praised my candor, but, of course, pledged himself to nothing. Only I know and feel this: if I succeed, I am sure of Florence, spite all the Logans there may be."

He seemed so hopeful, that it made Dora happy to look at him. They spent the evening in working together, and making use of her notes. They sat in the cottage parlor, with the rest of the family around them. Paul's mind required neither silence nor solitude for its exertions. He read and wrote, and Dora either helped her brother, or was wrapped up in him. Though she had no spare time or speech to bestow on John, Mrs. Luan's son did not miss his cousin's teasing. He thought it hard to be excluded from his chance, as he called it, of Mr. Courtenay's fortune, and he had said so bluntly on learning the terms on which Paul was to compete for it. Mrs. Courtenay, good soul, had wondered her brother-in-law did not at once leave the money to Paul, just giving him a few thousands to begin life with; but of herself, or even of her daughter Dora's claims, she said nothing. Paul was dear to her, as if he had been her own son, and on this evening she was engaged in doing a patience for a wish, which wish was her step-son's success in his undertaking.

"And it is going on beautifully, Paul," she said, with a beaming face. "This is my great patience, that which Louis the Eighteenth did every evening after his dinner. I really think it will succeed."

Paul smiled kindly, and Mrs. Luan went on silently with her patchwork. She had made no comment on her brother's decision, and her silence was laid to the fact that they had quarrelled at the time of her marriage, and never

been reconciled. It was hard to say what passed in her mind. She seemed as dull and as apathetic as ever. On one point she remained firm. Neither Dora's promised five hundred pounds, nor the chance which her brother's affection would certainly give her, of a handsome portion, if he inherited Mr. Courtenay's fortune, could make her see John's love for his cousin Dora with anything save detestation. She had no imagination to mislead her. Mr. Courtenay was not dead, but living. His promise could be revoked, and the fact that Dora was poor remained in all its ugly truth. It may be that this fear was enough for her, her mind not being one which could hold many ideas, or grasp many projects at the same time. At all events, it was the only thought she dwelt upon as she sat and stitched at her patchwork during the long autumn evening, whilst brother and sister toiled, and John looked on with sullen discontent. He thought it hard, and he said so, to be excluded from the competition, since there was one. Who was that Templemore, that he should step in and have a chance when he, John, had none? Why should not John have attempted a catalogue, and had his theory on the *Henri-deux* salt-cellar? So he grumbled, then went to bed, whilst Dora sat up with her brother, caring nothing for either labor or vigil, if they but helped him to a fortune and Florence Gale.

"Dear girl!" he said fondly. "She is so artless, she has already appropriated half the collection. She seems to take it for granted that the poor old gentleman must die off in order to make room for us."

Dora looked pensive, but did not wonder much; there was a charm in everything Florence said.



CHAPTER V.

THE catalogue proved a tedious task, and soon absorbed Paul Courtenay completely. He grew to be like a gambler watching the fate of his last stake. The law was neglected now, and he remained at home day after day "to work at the catalogue." He had acquired a genuine passion for the curiosities on which his fate hung, and that passion held him fast.

"There is no such collection as Mr. Courtenay's," he often said to Dora; "besides, we alone have got a *Henri-deux* salt-cellar, you know."

The whole family, indeed, got excited when the catalogue was mentioned. Mrs. Luan said nothing, but looked almost bright. John forgot his annoyance to wish Paul success; and Mrs. Courtenay, with a little shrill raising of the voice, "was sure she was that dear Paul must win."

Dora alone was rather grave. She too felt certain of her brother's success, but then how pale, how worn he looked! Paul's mother had died young, and Paul was very like the miniature of her in his room. Oh! what if the cost of success should prove too dear! This terrible thought came but once, and was banished so angrily that it came no more; but though the doors were closed upon it, the baleful presence had been there, and the uneasiness it had generated remained behind.

At length the catalogue was finished, and Paul, who would not trust the post with it, took it down himself to Deenah. He was full of hope, especially concerning his theory on the *Henri-deux* ware.

"There is a G on our salt-cellar," he said to Dora; "who can doubt that it was put there for *Girolamo della Robbia*, the great Italian?"

How happy and confident he looked, but how sunken his eyes were, how hollow his cheeks had grown! The thought haunted her, as, after seeing him off, she came home from the

station and passed through the garden to the house, looking at its last autumn flowers. A few pale and drooping chrysanthemums still braved the night and morning chill, and held on their languid life, ready to perish with the first sharp breath of coming winter. To Dora, in the fulness of her strength and youth, these flowers were ungenial. She looked at them with a sort of pity, but without love.

"Poor things!" she thought, as she passed on—"poor things! I wish for their sakes there were a perpetual spring. But would they really like it? They were born to bloom in autumn and to suffer."

With this thought came another that passed through her like a quick sharp pang. Why was Paul so sad-looking? Was he, too, meant to live in sorrow, and die early? She rebelled at the thought. She would not submit to it. Paul was her hero and her king, endowed with the heroic gift of perpetual youth and every kingly attribute. He should live, he should be strong and happy. He should prevail and be rich, ay, and have Florence Gale too, since he wished for her.

"It is a folly," thought Dora, looking down at it from the height of her superior wisdom. "I dare say he thinks he cannot help it, as if one could not always help these things! Poor Florence, it is no fault of hers if she is so much beneath dear Paul!"

As she came to this charitable conclusion, Dora entered the cottage and found Florence there. The young lady flew at her and gave her a warm hug.

"Now, darling!" she cried, "do tell me. Is it a good catalogue?"

"Yes, a very good one, Florence."

"And do you think Paul will get Deenah?"

"Mr. Courtenay is still living, Florence."

"Oh! but he is sure to die. He looks so ill!"

"So does Paul."

Florence pouted, and said a little sulkily,

"That is for me, Dora."

Dora sighed, and said more gently—

"I do wish you had spared him a little more; but what is done is done. Let us only hope he will be successful."

Florence laughed.

"He must be successful if he means to have me," she said saucily. "But why did he go off to Deenah? I came to see him, and he is gone! Why did he not manage to see me?"

"He is under a pledge to your father."

"Pledge fiddlesticks!" interrupted Florence. "Why does he keep it?"

"Because Paul cannot break a promise," was the grave reply.

"Oh! dear," ruefully said Miss Gale; "why, I had to tell such a set of fibs to get here. Firstly, that Mrs. Smith wanted me to take a drive with her—that was to papa; secondly, to Mrs. Smith, that I wanted to see Mrs. Courtenay about a charitable concern; and thirdly—" here Miss Gale looked bewildered—"I have forgotten the third," she said, "but I know there was one."

Dora heard her gravely. Paul adored Florence, but she wondered how long such adoration would last.

"We shall soon be going down to Deenah," resumed Florence, who would talk, no matter about what. "I suppose papa wants some shooting, but I think it would be much cheaper to buy game, don't you?"

"I suppose so," replied Dora passively.

"Such a beautiful place as old Courtenay's is," continued Florence enthusiastically; "I shall like it much, Dora. I have planned all sorts of changes, you know. These mousey old things shall not have the best room. We dined with old Courtenay last year, and oh! how he did prose! He had not slept all night, and he said so, also that his nails grew fast, and did I not think it a sign of ill-health? And I was thinking all the time of his Paschal candelabrum, as he calls it."

"The finest of its kind, excepting one at Milan," interrupted Dora with sparkling eyes.

"Is there really an uglier one?" asked Florence. "Well, I was thinking of it, and that if I had Deenah I should put it in the hall, and now of course I will."

Dora did not answer. She longed for silence and peace. Relief came; the door opened, and John Luan entered the room. It so happened that this was the first time Florence saw him, for she was a rare visitor at the cottage. She gave him a half-shy, half-doubtful look. He looked at her, too, and rather scornfully Dora watched what followed. Miss Gale could not do without admiration. Paul was not present. She at once took up with John. Mrs. Luan's son, so bashful with Dora, showed sudden brightness. This pretty dark-haired girl, whose face expressed vivacity and languor in a most bewitching degree, rather threw Dora into the shade. Indeed, so far as beauty went, there could be no comparison between these two. Take away her brightness, and a pair of dark-grey eyes from Dora, and there remained little to her save youth and its bloom. Dora was not jealous of John, but what girl likes to be eclipsed? She resented his faithlessness and Miss Gale's coquetry in equal degree. Besides, how dare she trifle thus with another whilst Paul was away? So she looked at the pair with an austerity of which John was unconscious, and which filled Miss Gale with mischievous glee. But this pretty pastime did not last. Florence started up with an artless exclamation of—

"Oh! dear, poor Mrs. Smith will be mad with me, she will. Good-bye, darling!"

And giving Dora a warm hug, and a fond kiss, and dropping John Luan a curtsy, she ran away, thinking,

"How savage Dora looks, and how sly she is! but have I not paid her out for it, though?"

From which it need not be concluded that Miss Gale meant any particular harm, or that

she had designs on penniless John Luan. Only pleasure was her law, and it was very pleasant to be looked at with such sincere admiration as that to be read in Mr. Luan's blue eyes.

"What a sweet girl!" he could not help saying, and he went to the window to look after the graceful figure lightly running down the road toward the carriage of Mrs. Smith. "Such soft dark eyes, and nice eyebrows!"

"Yes," apathetically said Dora, "very!"

She, too, looked after Florence, and as she looked she tried to solve a problem which puzzles many women, and the opposite of which, no doubt, perplexes many men. How is it, for instance, that girls like Florence, who have not the better and nobler part of beauty, its grand or its lovely meaning, only the white and red, or the well-shaped eye and arched brow, who have little mind, not much heart, and no more sense than wit, how is it they win, ay, and keep men's hearts?

"Paul has never been the same to me since he saw her face," thought Dora, with a swelling heart; "and it is well for me I do not care for John, for he swears by her already. How does she do it?"

Vexed question. How often the man of sense and sterling merit has tried to solve it, when he has seen himself put by for a coarse or a shallow fool! But Dora only thought of her own case, and she thought of it as if with a foreshadowing of what the future was to bring forth. She was not surprised, when John left the window, to find that it was to talk of Florence Gale; but the subject rather wearied her. She was glad when her aunt entered the room, and still better pleased when the evening was over, and she sat up alone waiting for Paul.

She looked at the fire, and tried to see Deenah in it. Then she checked herself. What was Deenah to her, or any place where Florence must reign!

"You are beautiful, Deenah," she said to herself; "but I must not think of you. Well, no matter, so dear Paul has you and is happy."

And as dear Paul himself was even then knocking at the door, she rose with joyous eagerness to let him in.

"Well?" she said, breathlessly.

"Well, all right!"

He looked radiant, and so did Dora.

"Did he promise?" she asked.

"No, no. Men like him never promise. But he paid me some handsome compliments on my industry."

"And what about Mr. Templemore?"

"Not a word. I never did think that Templemore had the least chance. I suspect it was some promise to his wife. How cold it is!"

"And now, what will you have?"

"Nothing, my dear. I shall just take the cold out of my bones and go to bed."

"How pale you look, Paul!"

"I was rather cold coming down—"

"Go to bed at once and take something hot."

But Paul declined the latter part of Dora's invitation. He would go to bed presently, but he would take nothing hot, and as Paul had a will of his own, Dora did not insist. They sat up awhile, and Dora mentioned Florence Gale's visit. His eyes softened, and he laughed when his sister told him about Florence's three fibs.

"Dear girl!" he exclaimed fondly.

"He must be bewitched," thought Dora; but aloud she said, "Go to bed, Paul, you look quite ill."

"I don't feel so. I feel very happy, Dora. Happiness lies before me. I think myself sure of the girl I love, of a handsome fortune and a fine estate, and as I must work on, I hope to these blessings to add those of a position won by my own exertions, and of honorable fame. I say it again, happiness lies before me, and

that prospect has not always been mine. And you shall be happy, Dora. A guinea a line will you get for that catalogue, and let me tell you there are not many who get so much."

"A guinea a line!" said Dora, clapping her hands, and looking delighted. "Oh! you generous Paul, you are surely the Prince of Publishers!"

"And what will you do with that money?"

"Buy aunt and mamma new dresses, take a cottage with a large garden to it; then I must have an aviary, a conservatory."

"You will find all these at Deenah!" he interrupted.

"But I do not mean to wait till Mr. Courtenay dies, for them, sir."

"Quite right, ma'am; and so good-night."

"And now I must go back to the law," said Paul, next morning.

This was more easily said than done. Paul's heart was no longer with his austere mistress. The goal of his ambition had been displaced and the task before him seemed dull, flat, and unprofitable. That catalogue had unsettled them all. And so time passed. Mrs. Courtenay wondered at her brother-in-law's silence.

"He ought to know Paul is anxious," she said, "and send him word the catalogue is all right. I believe he quarrelled with my dear husband because I was French; but all that must be over now, and he might call upon me. And if he objected to Mrs. Luan, he might have asked to know what day she was out; and, at all events, he ought to send us down a basket of game."

None of these things, however, did Mr. Courtenay do.

"But I am not afraid," said Paul to his sister. "I am sure my theory about the Henri-deux ware is the right one."

"Of course it is, Paul."

"Ah! you are truer to me than Palissy's wife was to him. What a fine fellow he was,

Dora! His trials and failures would have sickened any but a true hero. It did me good to read about him yesterday. He had labored nine months, his oven was ready, his vases were ready, his enamel was ready,—fire was to try all. Six days and six nights he spent tending that fire, and at the eleventh hour, when the goal seemed all but won, fuel failed him. Think of that agony! The man seized all he had at hand—chairs, tables, furniture, the very flooring of his room, and his wife goes distracted, and Palissy's neighbors say he is mad, and that he is setting fire to his house. Well, that madness was his last. He had prevailed; he knew the Italian secret, and had made it his."

"And you have written a good catalogue, and found out the secret of the Henri-deux ware, and Deenah is to be yours," replied Dora.

"And as you have helped me with the catalogue, you shall have a suite of rooms in Deenah."

Dora laughed, but there seemed very little likeness of any such contingency just yet. Time passed, and Mr. Courtenay gave no sign. They all lived in suspense, save Mrs. Luan. She brooded day after day, no longer over the best way of saving candle or sparing fire, but over the means of separating John and Dora.

"John must go to London," she at length discovered. Unluckily, to go to London money was needed, and neither John nor his mother had any. Many a sad mess did Mrs. Luan make with her patchwork about this time.

At length Mr. Courtenay wrote. It was Dora who received the letter, and with it a large sealed packet from the postman. She came in with it to the parlor, where Paul was putting on his gloves before going out.

"Is it Fate?" he asked gaily.

"I believe it is," replied Dora. "It comes from Deenah."

Mrs. Luan put down her patchwork.

"Perhaps John had better not go to London, after all. Suppose Mr. Courtenay were to portion Dora. Say give her two thousand pounds or so."

Whilst Mrs. Luan was thus calculating, Paul broke the seal of the letter, glanced over it, then said calmly, "I have failed."

A dead silence fell on them all.

"My theory on the Henri-deux ware was wrong," resumed Paul, quietly; "at least, my uncle says so." And he read aloud: "'The G on my salt-cellar has another origin than that you ascribe to it. In the year 1537, died Madame de Gouffier, wife of the Lord of Oiron. She left some valuable specimens of pottery. Now, Henri-deux ware is the only valuable French pottery of that period. Hence, Mr. Templemore concludes that the G on my salt-cellar is for Gouffier. I agree with him, and shall call my Heuri-deux ware 'POTTERY OF OIRON in Poitou.'"

The letter concluded with some compliments to Paul's success and industry in other respects, enclosed a check for two hundred pounds, to make up for loss of time, and lest he should accuse his uncle of partiality, was accompanied by a printed copy of Mr. Templemore's catalogue. Paul's voice never faltered, his cheek never blanched, his eye remained firm as he read this letter. Mrs. Courtenay looked blank; Mrs. Luan bewildered; and Dora hid her face in her hands and wept.

"Come," he said cheerfully, "that will mend nothing. Let us look at Mr. Templemore's catalogue."

Perhaps that was the hardest trial of all—perhaps it was too hard. Dora, who had checked her tears to look at her brother, read with the keenest pain the meaning of his face. Defeated was written there. Ay, Paul Courtenay felt doubly defeated, for he felt that his uncle's sentence was just, and Mr. Templemore's victory complete. He shut the book

with some emotion, took his gloves, looked for his hat, and saying rather hurriedly, "I shall be late," he left them. They were all silent after he was gone. They all knew—even Mrs. Luan knew it—that a thunderbolt had fallen, and that this young tree, so green, so fresh a few weeks back, was riven.

Mrs. Courtenay lamented over the loss of Mr. Courtenay's fortune, as if she had expected Paul to enter into possession of it the next day, and he had been unkindly deprived of it. Mrs. Luan, who never said much, seemed to have grown dumb; and Dora, the light, gay Dora, was gloomy, and surreptitiously took Mr. Templemore's catalogue, and went up with it to her brother's room, the only place where she knew that she could look at it in peace. She sat by the window, whence she could see, if she chose, the distant bay, with the sea melting away into a soft, gray sky; but little charm had that grand prospect for Dora now. She, too, for once, wanted to be miserable, and she had her wish. The catalogue was a wonderful catalogue. It was magnificently printed, and the illustrations were beautiful—mere woodcuts, indeed, but executed by a practised hand, and with a vigor and a spirit which Dora, who drew well, could appreciate. The text, however, was the criterion of Mr. Templemore's work; and there too, alas! he far surpassed her brother. Paul's taste for virtue was a fictitious, acquired taste; Mr. Templemore's was evidently a natural gift, matured by long, careful cultivation. Dora could not tell how far he was right in his theory concerning the Henri-deux ware, but she was obliged to confess that it was infinitely more plausible than her brother's. Mr. Templemore's superiority in other matters she also ascertained; but she could not go to the end of the painful task. She threw the book away in a passion of resentment and grief, and burst into a flood of bitter tears.

Slow and miserable was the rest of this un-

happy day. Paul came home very late, but he found Dora sitting up for him in the parlor. He looked scarcely pleased. Perhaps he was in one of those moods when silence and solitude are most acceptable. Yet Dora was not troublesome. She did not intrude advice or consolation. She only looked at him with gentle, loving eyes, until his heart smote him for the coldness of his averted glances, and he beckoned her to his side. At once she came, and twining her arm around his neck, laid her cheek to his.

"Poor Dora!" he said, kindly, "you have all the sorrow, as you had all the trouble. But do not fret for me. I shall do. It is all over!"

"You saw her?"

"No; but I wrote to her. She had never been pledged to me, but for all that I set her free. I fancy she will marry soon—I trust she will be happy, dear girl!"

Dora's eyes flashed. Happy with another!—oh! how could Paul say that?—how could he feel it? But he did feel it. Perhaps his was the disinterested love which is as rare as true love itself; perhaps it was not very deep love, after all, and could be resigned easily to loss and separation.

"But you, Paul," she said, "how will you feel?"

"Unhappy for a time, then I shall grow comforted, no doubt. But, Dora, I do not think I shall ever marry."

"Then if you do not, I will not either," she said, impetuously—"never, Paul!"

"Never!—what will John say to that?"

"John may say what he pleases—I do not care about him. Besides, I would not marry my cousin."

"Well, time will show what either of us will do; and now, Dora, it is late—go to bed, dear."

"Why should I not sit up here with you?—we used to sit up for the catalogue, hoping

and dreaming. Why should we not sit up now, regretting and lamenting together?"

"I cannot talk about it," he said, in a low tone. "I wish I could—it would be better for me—but I cannot."

"And what will you do about that money, Paul?" asked Dora, with flashing eyes; "you will not keep it?"

"Yes, Dora, I will. My first impulse was to return it, and if Mr. Courtenay's decision had been an unjust one—not a farthing of it would I touch. But there is the hardship of my case. I cannot think myself an ill-used man; I had a chance given me, and I lost it. It was fair play, Dora. I should only display a small, silly pride, if I were to refuse this gift of a relative who meant me kindly."

Dora was silent. She seldom opposed any decision of her brother's. To please and obey him was the law of her life, and when he again said that it was late, she took the hint and left him. Mrs. Courtenay was already fast asleep, but Dora could not go to bed at once. She could not forget Paul, sitting by the lonely hearth below, and mourning over his lost love and lost fortune, both wrecked in the same little tempest—little to the cold world looking on—to him how grievous and how sad! At length he came up-stairs, but he, too, stayed sitting up. What was he doing? Dora stole out on the dark landing, and listened at her brother's door. She heard a chair moving slightly. Paul was sitting, then; yet if he wanted to sit up, might he not have stayed below? His light was not out, Dora looked in at him through the keyhole. Then stole back to her room with a deep sigh: Paul was reading the catalogue.

That catalogue became the unhappy young man's retrospective torment. He never read it in the presence of the family, yet Dora knew that he studied it night and morning. He gave the day to the law; the hours which were his he devoted to this morbid brooding

over the past. There was no doubt a sort of dreary satisfaction in comparing his own fruitless attempt with his rival's sure effort, in thinking, "I should have succeeded if I had done this, and I failed just by that hair's-breadth." If Dora had dared, she would have remonstrated with him, but she did not venture to do so. It was Paul's misfortune that he must suffer in silence.

If anything could have added new bitterness to his regret, it was the sudden decease of Mr. Courtenay. He died at Deenah toward the close of the year. By his will he left the bulk of his property to Mr. Templemore. To Dora, Paul, and John he left five hundred pounds apiece. Neither his sister, Mrs. Luan, nor his sister-in-law, Mrs. Courtenay, was mentioned in Mr. Courtenay's will.

"A very strange, uncivil man," said Mrs. Courtenay, stiffly.

Mrs. Luan, who had most reason to complain, said nothing, but she thought—

"John can go to London now."

How that thought passed from Mrs. Luan's mind to John's no one ever knew, not even John himself; but he entered the cottage one evening overflowing with the project, and finding Dora sitting alone by the fire, and looking rather pensive, he came up to her with the question—

"Anything new, Dora?"

"Nothing," she replied, gravely, "only I was thinking about our five hundred pounds. Mr. Ryan says he could double the amount for us in no time."

"I mean to go to London with mine," said John.

"To London!"

If he had said to Timbuctoo, Dora could scarcely have looked more surprised.

"Yes, for my profession. It will be such an advantage to me."

John thrust his fingers through his fair locks, and looked like a man who has five

hundred pounds, and knows his status in society.

"An advantage to leave us," gently replied Dora.

She only thought of the cousinship, of the old familiarity, of the friendship which had grown with years, and were to be now all put by; but her gentle voice, and her mild, reproachful look, said far more than this to John Luan. He turned red and pale, and trembled.

"Dora," he faltered, "we are too young—you know?"

"Too young for what?" asked Dora, rising, and standing straight before him.

She spoke so coldly, she looked so lofty, that John was dumb; but if anything had been needed to urge him to go to London, that look and that question of Dora's would have done it. He sat down without answering her, and looked rather sullen and discomfited. When his mother and Mrs. Courtenay came in, he spoke of his journey as a settled thing. Mrs. Courtenay lifted up her hands in amazement.

"My dear boy," she said, raising her little shrill voice, "what can take you to London?"

"Mr. Courtenay's five hundred pounds, aunt," answered John, rather carelessly.

"But Mr. Ryan would double it for you," cried Mrs. Courtenay; "he would treble it, John," she added, with a little scream of delight at the prospect of such doubling and trebling, which is indeed very delightful whilst it takes place on the increasing and not on the decreasing principle. It is charming to multiply your capital by three, but such multiplication sometimes ends by the division of your sum total, and then, alas! it is grievous enough. Such lamentable results Mrs. Courtenay by no means contemplated, and she candidly wondered at John's obstinacy in not letting his five hundred pounds be trebled by Mr. Ryan.

"Mr. Ryan would not take the trouble,"

replied John, trying to get out of it this way.

"Oh, yes he will, if I ask him."

"Well, then, don't ask him, mamma," said Dora, a little tartly. "John wants to go."

John hung his head and looked sheepish; but it was true enough, he wanted to go, and he went.

When it came to the parting Dora forgave him. She could not go with him to the station, for Mrs. Courtenay was unwell, but she clung to him rather fondly as he bade her adieu at the end of the garden, where the cab stood waiting.

"Good-by, old Johnny!" she said, with a sigh. "I know you will never come back."

"Yes, I will," he interrupted. "Good-by, my dear girl!"

Tears stood in his eyes as he kissed her. Perhaps, seeing her so kind, John Luan was sorry to be going, after all.

"You'll be late," said his mother, who did not like that parting.

John looked at his watch, kissed his cousin again, and entered the cab with Mrs. Luan. His last words were—

"I shall come back sooner than you think, Dora."

"Poor Johnny!" she thought, as the cab drove away; "he means it, but he will not come back."

When Mrs. Luan returned from the station she looked flushed and excited. This parting, the first which had ever taken place between her and her son, had been too much for her. Her mind had not perhaps realized its keen agony until she was called upon to endure it. Dora looked at her with gentle pity, but there was a sort of sternness in Mrs. Luan's eyes as she returned the look. That bright hair and those pink cheeks had divided her from her darling, and she hated them. There is a strange inability in some natures to understand other natures. It was then, and was

ever afterward, impossible to Dora to understand this woman, whom she had known all her life. She saw that she was grieving for her son, but she did not understand the nature of that grief.

"Dear aunt," she said, going and sitting down by her, "you must not fret. It is in the nature of young men, I suppose, to leave those whom they love best. I dare say John has been thinking about that a long time, and when he got these five hundred pounds he could not resist the temptation."

This soothing speech Mrs. Luan did not answer, but, to Dora's surprise, she rose, took off her cap, and flung it to the other end of the room, saying,

"Oh, my head is so hot!"

To take off her cap and throw it about became one of Mrs. Luan's habits from that day forth.

CHAPTER VI.

It may be that Paul Courtenay had hoped to the last, and that his uncle's will was a blow to him. It seemed to Dora that he looked sadder and graver after John's departure than he had ever looked before. She watched him closely, and thought that he was both pale and grave when he came home one evening in the spring that followed Mr. Courtenay's death. A book lay open before him, and he never once turned its pages.

"Something new has happened," thought Dora.

Mr. Ryan's entrance helped to divert her thoughts. Mr. Ryan often came to see them of an evening now. He had invested their thousand pounds in some wonderful manner, and the doubling or trebling was going on amazingly. Mrs. Courtenay, who took the deepest interest in that process, could not weary of the subject, and tried many a patience for its sake. She called it "it," and

never specified it by any other term. So almost her first words to Mr. Ryan this evening were,

"Well, Mr. Ryan, how is it going on?"

"Nobly!" was Mr. Ryan's emphatic reply.

"Well, but when am I to be rich?" asked Dora, a little tartly. "I want to sit down, and fold my hands, and be a useless fine lady, Mr. Ryan."

"Oh! you girl!"

"My dear, did you not hear Mr. Ryan saying it was going on nobly?" remarked her mother, with gentle reproof. "Now, when a thing like that goes on nobly," cried Mrs. Courtenay, raising her voice, and clasping her hands with a sort of childish delight, "I call it beautiful."

"Paul, what do you say to it?" whispered Dora. "Are we to be rich?"

She bent over his shoulder, and looked in his face. He smiled gravely.

"Do you wish to be rich, Dora?" he asked.

Dora had had that wish; not that wealth was very dear to her for its own sake, but because she loved her brother. But now that Paul was to be poor, and that Deenah was gone, it seemed to her that money was of little worth.

"I don't know," she hesitatingly replied, "yet I suppose it must be pleasant."

"Pleasant!" a little indignantly remarked Mr. Ryan. He had money, plenty said the world, and he did not like to hear Mammon slighted and called pleasant.

"You are quite ridiculous, my dear," said Mrs. Courtenay.

But Dora did not heed them. She had returned to her chair, and thence she looked at Paul so grave, so sad, and she felt again, "Something new has happened." She knew what had happened three days later. On the morning of Mr. Ryan's visit Florence Gale had married a Mr. Logan, very rich, said report, and young and handsome, it added. So it was

probable that Mrs. Logan had not been made a martyr to filial obedience, after all. Of this Paul said nothing to his sister. He had closed the book of his life at the page where love and hope had each written his sad *vizit*, and he opened it again at the page of hard work and lawful ambition. He was grave, and by no means cheerful, but he was neither nervous nor melancholy. He bore his lot manfully, and Mr. Courtenay's fortune and the catalogue and Florence Gale were soon as things that had never been at Mrs. Courtenay's cottage.

Seeing him thus, Dora gradually became as bright and as radiant as ever. Joy had returned to her, and she would not let the lovely guest be gone. She read, she sang. She woke music from her old spinet, she was house-keeper and a young lady, and she was as happy as the day was long. Early one summer evening Paul came home. He found his sister in the garden watering her flowers. She turned round on hearing him, and became suddenly silent.

"Paul! how pale you are!" she said, a little anxiously.

"Am I?" he cheerfully replied, "I feel very well, however. I have just met Mrs. Logan," he added; "she looked both lovely and happy. She came and shook hands with me, and looked as light-hearted as a butterfly."

"I never liked her," resentfully cried Dora; "she was never worthy of you."

"It was not her fault, Dora, if I was mistaken in her; but it was mine."

"How she lured you on about that catalogue," continued Dora, "and then how soon she forsook you!"

"She was not pledged to me."

"True love needs no pledges," loftily replied Dora.

"But suppose some women cannot feel true love," he playfully suggested. "Are you sure of yourself, Dora?"

"No," she honestly answered, "for I cannot imagine I shall ever care for any one as I care for you, Paul. And if you do not marry," she added, warmly, "I never shall—never!"

Paul smiled, but he thought it unlikely that either he or his sister should ever marry. He felt no inclination for wedded life, and Dora was proud and poor, and lived in such seclusion that the male sex might well be forgiven if they did not appreciate her merits.

"Well, little Dora," he said, cheerfully, "we shall be none the more unhappy for it, if it is to be."

"Unhappy! I should think not."

She raised her face for a kiss, which she got, and perhaps, as she received it, Dora felt some little jealous joy at the thought that the day of Florence Gale had gone by, and her own had come back.

Paul retired early that evening. He was a little tired, he said, and Dora could not waken him by playing on her "piano," as she and every one at home called it, by one of those convenient fictions in which it is pleasant for the poor to indulge. She sat and sewed by the light of the solitary candle, whilst Mrs. Courtenay tried her patience, and nodded over it, and Mrs. Luan pored over a letter from "poor John." A loud ring at the garden bell startled them all.

"Light the other candle!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, wakening up with an alarmed start; but before Dora could obey that prudent order, the heedless little servant-girl had admitted Mr. Ryan, who burst in upon them like a tempest.

"News, news!" he shouted, waving his hat in the wildest excitement.

"How is it going on?" cried Mrs. Courtenay, breathlessly.

"Grandly! Paul and Dora have two hundred a year each. It has been coming on these six months. I sold out and invested

again this very afternoon—two hundred a year each!"

A thousand pounds had given them two hundred a year each! Ignorant as she was of money matters, Dora knew that this was grand trebling indeed. The tidings so bewildered her that she stood still and mute. Mrs. Courtenay, on the contrary, uttered three little screams of delight; whilst Mrs. Luan took off her cap and flung it at Mr. Ryan, on whose head it alighted sideways, giving his red face a waggish and knowing aspect.

This sobered them all.

"Is the woman mad?" asked Mr. Ryan, staring, and taking off Mrs. Luan's cap with some indignation.

"I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Luan, calmly. "I meant to throw it on the table."

"Did you, though! I wonder why it flew up upon me, then! And pray, ma'am, why did you take off your cap at all, and fling it about so?"

"My head is so hot," she replied, staring at him, "and you upset me with your two hundred a year."

"Yes, yes; your son John has made ducks and drakes of his money—I know—I know."

And Mr. Ryan humanely considered that this disappointment was a sufficient explanation of the cap affair, as he called it, when he related the incident to his sister, Miss Ryan, who was then on a visit to him.

"Oh! how you have trebled!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, raising her voice and her hands in admiration. "How you have trebled, Mr. Ryan!"

"Dear Paul," said Dora, as happy tears stood in her eyes; "he has been working too hard, but he can rest now."

"Oh! you girl! A young man can never work too hard."

"And I say that Paul has been working too hard," replied Dora; "but I must go and tell him the news. A fairy tale—a real fairy tale!"

She lightly ran up-stairs, leaving her mother in ecstasies, and Mrs. Luan settling her cap on, but looking very dull and gray. What had become of John's five hundred pounds by this time? And why had she sent him away from Dora, who had two hundred a year now? Was this the end of her planning? Oh! if she had but waited!

"I shall not waken him if he sleeps," thought Dora; "but if he is awake, I will tell him with a kiss. Paul, my darling, we are rich now. We can afford not to think any more of Mr. Courtenay's fortune. And with two hundred a year and your profession you can find a wife—a true good wife—not a Florence Gale, who could forget you for a Mr. Logan."

With a noiseless foot she entered his room. It was dark, and the light she held fell on the pillow where his calm face lay sleeping. She put the candlestick down and softly stole toward him. When she stood by his side she looked at him with eyes swimming in tears. How altered he was since the day when he had come back from Deenah, full of eager hope! How pale and thin and worn he looked in his sleep! And what had he been reading?—that dreadful catalogue again! She knelt on the rug and softly took his hand, which hung loosely outside the bedclothes. But scarcely had she touched it when she started up and uttered a piercing cry. That hand was cold—cold as marble; and, alas! that cry, though it filled the house and brought up its terrified tenants around her, did not waken her brother. Never, never more would Paul draw her to his side and call her his little Dora. Brother and sister, whom nothing was to divide, were parted thus early on their journey; and whilst one took his rest, having earned his wages, the other was to go on the sad pilgrimage alone and desolate!

"My brother, my brother!" was all she could say. For weeks this was her cry, for

years it rang in her heart, "My brother!" In every hour of tribulation the sorrowful words were spoken.

Every one grieved for this young man. Mrs. Courtenay mourned for him as for a son. Mrs. Luan shed genuine tears, and remembered with a pang that his death gave Dora four hundred a year. Mr. Ryan did not weary of lamenting "the poor boy's untimely fate;" but of all those who could say, "Thus died Paul Courtenay," none knew that with him died the pride and the ambition of his sister's heart. She had loved him, but she had also hoped in him. He had been, though she knew it not, perhaps, the great stake in her life. All her hopes and her desires had rested upon him, never once upon herself. Through him she was to be honored, in his reflected glory she was to shine. Of her own value and her own part in the great human drama she never thought. When he went, all went with him. It might be well for both of them that it should be so. He never knew the bitterness of disappointment, nor she that of a sudden wakening. He was her hero now for ever. He was to have been a great orator, the rich man, the pride and stay of his family. How often had the triumphs of Demosthenes, of Chatham and Grattan, made her heart throb! How often had she sat at twilight, by the open window, or over the smouldering fire, listening to her brother's fervid eloquence, to the murmurs of applause and the deafening cheers of a senate, whilst her mother chatted prettily or her aunt stitched at her patchwork!

All this was over now; but better perhaps that death had stepped in, silencing the eloquent lips with an icy hand, than that Time, the great disenchanter, should have shown to Paul and his sister the folly of a long-cherished dream.

But this Dora never felt, and never was to feel. The object of her adoration was safe from a fate so grievous. Yet perhaps because

she had loved him so fondly, and hoped in him so fervently, was her grief felt and not spoken. To all seeming, indeed, it was not a deep grief. She mourned, but not with such a sorrow as her impassioned love ought to have called forth. So thought Mr. Ryan, and even her mother. Dora was pale and thin, but she smiled brightly, nay, she laughed—why, she actually sang again, though Paul was in his grave. She sang his songs, too—not plaintive, but merry Irish melodies, which had been dear to him.

"The Irish are a light-hearted people, Mr. Ryan," solemnly said Mrs. Courtenay to her friend.

Mr. Ryan did not answer this national question, but listening to Dora's singing up-stairs in Paul's room, he thought, "That girl puzzles me." He also thought that he would study her, but the opportunity to do so was not granted to Mr. Ryan.

Paul had not long been dead, when Mrs. Courtenay said to her daughter one afternoon,

"I am sure it was this dreadful climate that killed my poor boy."

"But, mamma, Paul's was a heart-complaint."

"Of course it was; well, the climate killed him—and I am sure I have a heart-complaint too."

"Dear mamma, I cannot think that. My dear brother was so pale, and you have a lovely color."

"But such dreadful palpitations!" sighed Mrs. Courtenay; "oh! such dreadful palpitations!"

Dora put down her work and fell into the saddest dream. Paul had never complained of palpitations, but said he was well to the last.

"I want a change," pursued Mrs. Courtenay; "and I think I shall go to London."

"To London!" cried Dora, much startled.

"Yes, London air always agreed with me."

"But, mamma, London air is surely not good air?"

"Beautiful air!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, raising her voice with enthusiasm.

Dora looked at her aunt. Was it she who, to be with her son, had suggested so strange a step to her mother; but Mrs. Luan stitched on stolidly at her patchwork, and said,

"There is no air like Dublin air."

"Do listen to her!" compassionately exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay. "No air like Dublin air! Poor thing!"

"Then aunt had nothing to do with it," thought Dora, in her innocence.

She tried to oppose Mrs. Courtenay's wish; Mr. Ryan also interfered, but to no purpose—there was a secret agency at work more potent than they knew of. Mrs. Luan's plan was of the simplest kind. She asked her sister-in-law daily how she was, and if she felt quite well. She put these questions when Dora was not present, and with them, and a few careless hints, she carried the day, and the London journey was decided upon. The cottage was given up, the furniture was sold off, and on the morning of the day when they were to go to Kingston, thence to sail for Holyhead, Dora went alone to Glasnevin.

A plain head-stone marked Paul Courtenay's grave. His name and age, and the word *REQUIESCAT*, were his only epitaph. Grass and a few flowers already grew over him. As she looked at that narrow space, at these few feet of earth which held all that had been dearest to her, Dora's heart overflowed with other feelings than those of sorrow. There came to her in that sad hour a bitterness which she could not restrain. She remembered her uncle, who had tempted Paul in his poverty, and urged him to a task beyond his ability; she remembered Florence Gale, who had spurred him on to labor beyond his strength, then forgotten him; she remembered Mr. Templemore, whose

triumph had embittered even Paul Courtenay's last hours; and to these three she attributed his premature death. "I must forgive them," she thought; "I must forgive the living as well as the dead; but to forgive is not to love, and never, never shall there be kindness between them and Paul's sister!"

Alas! was this a spot, was this an hour for thoughts like these? A lowering gray sky bent over the cemetery, a southwesterly wind moaned amongst the young trees; it had rained all night, and the sodden earth said how cold and how dreary was the bed of the dead. There they slept around Dora in hundreds, in thousands. Did they murmur, did they complain? Life, its fever, its troubles, and its hundred cares were over for them, and was it not well? If they could have spoken, would not their faint, low voices have risen to reprove the resentful girl who brought to their peaceful realm the angry feelings of life?

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. COURTENAY had left Dublin a year when Mr. Ryan took a journey to London, and scarcely giving himself time to dine, at once entered a cab, and drove off to see his old friends.

Mrs. Courtenay lived in a pretty little villa in Bayswater; a white nest, with young green trees around it. Mr. Ryan gave the place a gratified look as he alighted and saw it in the clear moonlight of a cold spring evening. "Dora's bower," thought Mr. Ryan. A neat little parlor-maid opened the door and admitted him. "That's right," thought Mr. Ryan; "no page in buttons—no fourth-rate man-servant, but an irreproachable young woman. Dora is a sensible girl." The crimson staircase carpet, with its brass rods; the spacious landing, adorned with pretty flower-stands, confirmed this favorable impression; and the drawing-

room added to it. A very charming drawing-room it was, not luxurious, though graceful and elegant. "Dora's kingdom," thought Mr. Ryan; and when the folding-doors opened, and Dora entered the room, robed in white silk, with roses blushing on her bosom, and wreathed in her bright hair, she appeared in Mr. Ryan's eyes as the fair queen of that little realm. Mr. Ryan looked at her and at the drawing-room, and at Mrs. Courtenay's black satin dress—nay, even at Mrs. Luan's stylish cap, with admiring eyes. For were not all these luxuries and tokens of prosperity the result of the four hundred a year his skillful management had secured to Dora Courtenay?

"Ah! ha! you were going off to a party?" he cried, gayly; "why, even that rascal, John Luan, has white kid gloves on. You did not expect me, did you, now?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Ryan," replied Mrs. Courtenay, in a most dolorous tone.

She sank down on a chair with a heavy sigh. Mrs. Luan took a low seat, and sat straight and motionless upon it. John Luan threw himself on the sofa and looked deeply sulky. Dora alone remained standing, and she greeted her old friend very kindly; but something ailed her too, for there was a deep flush on her cheek, very different from its pure clear bloom.

"Why, what has happened?" cried Mr. Ryan, staring around him in amazement.

"Oh! we are not going to the party," replied Mrs. Courtenay. "Professor Gray has just called to tell us that Brown and Co. have stopped payment, and that Mr. Brown is off somewhere or other with poor Dora's four hundred a year, and other people's thousands."

This was news indeed! And, though Mr. Ryan burst forth into incredulous exclamations, very certain news, unfortunately. Dora's money had vanished for ever in the gulf of Brown and Co.'s difficulties, though, luckily for them all, the little income of Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan was still safe.

"And we were going to such a nice party," plaintively said Mrs. Courtenay. "I almost wish Professor Gray had kept his news till to-morrow."

"Professor Gray takes a strong interest in Dora," ironically remarked John. "Did you not see, aunt, how he changed color when she told him she was penniless, and how crestfallen he looked as he left us?"

"Yes," innocently replied Mrs. Courtenay, "he is one of Dora's admirers, you know. And so was Mr. Brown. The last time she wore that dress and these roses, he said they were set in gold."

"Brown is a scoundrel!" angrily said John.

Poor John Luan! For the last year he, too, had sighed at Dora's feet! He, too, had thought she looked lovely in her white silk dress, and with the roses in her hair, and he had burned with jealous wrath whenever Professor Gray or the delinquent Brown looked at her. Of one rival he was rid, and the other he suspected he need not fear; but what availed it? Dora was penniless, and John Luan as poor as ever. He had come to take his aunt and cousin to the party, and to worship and admire Dora, and feel wronged because others did as much; instead of which he had the doubtful satisfaction of calling Brown a scoundrel, and of knowing that he could by no means afford to marry a poor girl and keep a wife.

"Poor John!" thought Dora. "I like him, I admire Professor Gray, and that cool, fair-looking Mr. Brown was very pleasing in his way; but the thought of becoming Mrs. Luan, Mrs. Gray, or Mrs. Brown always made me shudder. I wish I could tell him so."

"Dear, dear, that is sad!" exclaimed Mr. Ryan, shaking his head at Dora. "That is sad, my poor girl!"

"Yes," she replied, "my little prosperity came like a fairy gift, and like a fairy gift it

went away. But I was born poor, you know, and can go back to poverty very easily."

John gazed admiringly at this young stoic, who looked so serene—and so pretty—with the roses in her hair, and he said, with sudden animation,

"It was only yesterday Thompson said I was sure of that appointment. I shall certainly go down to Oxfordshire to-morrow."

Mrs. Luan heard him, and looked at him and Dora with the sullen look of yore. For the last year she had, as it were, wooed Dora for John, after her own awkward fashion. And now her labor was worse than vain, and she once more saw John and Dora in a poor cottage, with babies around them, whilst in the background appeared a vision of Mr. Brown in an express train, with Dora's four hundred a year in his carpet-bag.

"If she had taken John at once," resentfully thought Mrs. Luan, "her money would be all right; and if he had not taken a fancy to her his money would not be almost all gone."

"Dear! dear!" again said Mr. Ryan, "it is very dreadful! Four hundred a year, such a nice little income; and all gone—all gone!"

Yes, it was all gone, indeed, and with it had departed the new life which had been so pleasant—the admirers, the parties, the intellectual society, the little luxuries, the many comforts. All these were gone, and Mr. Ryan no longer wielded that magic wand of capital which would conjure them back again. With a heavy heart he left his friends, and he spent the night in maturing plans for their benefit.

But when he called the next day Mr. Ryan found that everything had already been settled without the help of his advice.

"It is no use fretting, you know, Mr. Ryan," said Mrs. Courtenay, with airy fortitude; "staying in London is out of the question, and Dublin air disagrees with me, so we shall go to France."

"To France!—why, who put that into your head, Mrs. Courtenay?"

"No one," tartly replied that lady; "but I am sure my native air is the very thing for me."

Mr. Ryan stared. Mrs. Luan was looking at the wall, and Dora's eyes were downcast. John was not present.

"And what does John Luan say to that?" he asked.

"John knows nothing about it," was the supercilious reply. "He went off to Oxfordshire by the first train, and it was only five minutes ago I made up my mind that Rouen was to be our future residence. But now, Mr. Ryan, I have a great favor to ask of you. Mrs. Luan and I will go off at once, and settle our new home. Will you kindly take care of Dora here, and help her to dispose of the furniture?"

Mr. Ryan tried to remonstrate, but opposition only confirmed Mrs. Courtenay in her purpose. Seeing her so determined, Mr. Ryan desisted. After all, going to France might not be so bad a plan. France was cheaper than it is now, and economy must be once more the law of Mrs. Courtenay's life.

It is always sad to break up a home, and so Dora now found it, spite her stoicism. When it had been ascertained beyond doubt that not a farthing of her money could be recovered, Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan proceeded together to France. Once more John Luan's mother consented to leave him, in order to separate him from Dora. She knew that the best way to keep Mrs. Courtenay and Dora in their new home was to accompany them. Indeed, she had a strong presentiment that her volatile little sister-in-law, if not watched, might escape back again to England. Rather than run so great a risk, Mrs. Luan would forego even bidding adieu to her son, who was still down in Oxfordshire, hunting for his appointment.

A letter soon came from Rouen, informing Dora that Mrs. Courtenay had discovered the most delightful lodging, with the dearest old creature, and that all she wanted to be perfectly happy was her dear Dora's presence.

The furniture was disposed of to a broker, so that on receiving this letter Dora had but to pack up her trunk and leave the house where she had spent some pleasant, if not happy hours. She went over it alone, sighing gently at the loss of her four hundred a year. She looked wistfully at the deserted drawing-room, which she had taken such pleasure in adorning. Never more should Dora Courtenay see pleasant, genial faces gathered there; no more should she hear intellectual and witty talk within its walls. A few letters from Mr. Ryan to a few clever people in London, a few parties, and Dora's bright happy face had soon made Mrs. Courtenay's little villa an attractive rendezvous.

"But all that is over now," thought Dora, as she closed the door, and went up to her own room; "we must return to the old life. Ah! if we had but dear Paul, how welcome it would be!"

That was the thought that ever came back. Deep within her heart slept the remembrance of her great sorrow, but every now and then it woke again to cruel and bitter life. That was the thought, too, which had kept Dora's heart free. No man seemed able to waken within her even a far echo of that passionate love which she had once bestowed on her brother Paul. When she looked at his portrait, the keen eye, the intellectual brow, the manly look, all seemed to say, "Find the like of us if you can." Who, indeed, could compare with the lost hero of her young worship?

"Yes, all would be well if I had you," she now thought, glancing toward the miniature, which hung between the fireplace and her narrow bed. "Oh! my brother! my brother!" she exclaimed, as she clasped her hands in

sudden sorrow, and could not see that adored image for blinding tears. "Why did I lose you, my brother?"

Vain appeal to the inexorable grave! Yet how often will that pitiful cry, "My brother!" be heard like a wail in the life of Dora Courtenay! She had sunk on a chair in her grief, when her room door opened, and Mrs. Luan came in.

"Aunt," exclaimed Dora, much amazed, "what has happened?"

"Nothing. What are you crying for?"

Dora did not answer. She never could speak of her grief. Mrs. Luan took her bonnet off and threw it on a chair.

"You want to stay," she said, angrily

"Aunt, I do not."

"Then you want to go back to Dublin."

"Oh! no," sadly replied Dora.

The thought of returning to her lost home was exquisitely painful to her. What was that home without Paul's dear presence to cheer it, or fill it with bright hopes and fond illusions? Moreover, in Dublin she must meet Florence, or see Mr. Templemore. She did not hate them, but they had so filled her brother's heart with grief, that this proud and silent heart had broken, and the spot that held them became to her as the fatal gulf, or the pitiless rock where some loved being has perished, to be shunned for evermore. But Mrs. Luan still looked at her mistrustfully. She had come back to fetch her niece and take her away, actuated by one of those wonderful maternal presentiments which fail so rarely, and she had found John Luan below with Mr. Ryan. He had just arrived from Oxfordshire, rather sulky and crestfallen at having failed completely in his object, and very indignant with Mrs. Courtenay for taking her daughter off to a strange country. Thus he spoke to his mother with the unconscious selfishness of the young. She looked at him sullenly. Why did he not think of her going? Why did he

not want her to stay with him? Why was it all about parting with Dora, and nothing for the separation between himself and his mother? In this jealous mood Mrs. Luan went up to Dora's room, and seeing her tears, gave them but one meaning. Dora was crying at parting from John Luan! From that moment forward Mrs. Luan no longer left Dora's side. She allowed Mr. Ryan to settle with the brokers, she suffered the furniture to be removed and money to be wasted and squandered at a terrible rate, according to her economical principles, and still she stuck to Dora; whilst John stalked about the house with gloomy and sullen looks, and thought of his lonely rooms in Howland Street.

In one respect Mrs. Luan's caution was not needed. John had no intention of making open love to Dora. He had not done so when she had four hundred a year, and he would not do so now that she had not a shilling. Indeed, all Dora's admirers, with Professor Gray at their head, had vanished. Report exaggerated her losses, and the thought of marrying a whole family daunts most men.

"It is well for me I cared for none of them," thought Dora, rather stung to find how suddenly her value had fallen.

And now all was ready, and Dora and Mrs. Luan had but to depart. John and Mr. Ryan saw them to the station.

"Good-by, dear girl," said Mr. Ryan, kindly; "I shall keep my eye on Mr. Brown, you know, and if anything turns up, why you may rely upon me."

Dora could scarcely repress a smile. Mr. Ryan's eye in London, or even in Dublin, did not seem to her very likely to affect Mr. Brown in America, and she had not the faintest hope of anything turning up in the shape of money. John was silent, but he was rather pale, and Dora saw that this parting affected him. "Poor John," thought Dora, kindly; "he has fancied himself so long in love with me, that

he believes it. I dare say he will go on so to the end."

But she went up to him and said a few kind words about better times that were coming for them all, and his getting that appointment in the end.

"And if I do get it," began John, rather eagerly; but he ceased abruptly on seeing his mother behind him. He had a vague consciousness that Dora's altered circumstances had also altered his mother's feelings and wishes.

"Time to go, John," said Mr. Ryan.

Yes, it was time, and spite Mrs. Luan's watchful eye, John took Dora in his arms and kissed her.

"Tell aunt I shall go and see her in Rouen," he whispered.

"What is it? What did John say?" eagerly asked Mrs. Luan, when the two gentlemen were gone, and she and Dora sat in the railway carriage.

"John says he will come and see us in Rouen," simply replied Dora.

Railway and steamboat travelling has no romance now. It is swift and convenient—we must not ask it to be eventful. After an easy passage, and a rapid journey through a green landscape, Dora and her aunt reached Rouen in the evening. Narrow streets and church-spires rising through the darkness, seemed to Dora the chief characteristics of Rouen as they drove through it.

"Oh, such a dear old place," said Mrs. Courtenay, whom they had found at the station; "I am sure you will like our apartments, Dora, and that dear old thing, Madame Bertrand."

Dora asked no better than to be pleased with everything. But when she reached their new home, and saw a dingy old house, a dark and narrow staircase, a clean little old landlady in a cotton apron and white cap, and some very poorly-furnished rooms on the first

floor, she tried not to sigh as she remembered the pretty villa in Bayswater.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE often-boasted charm of novelty was not felt by Dora when she awoke the next morning and looked around her. The little room, with its dingy, old-fashioned furniture, not one article of which was endeared by familiarity, seemed both cheerless and unpleasant. The ceiling was low and depressing. The few sounds which arose from the street had no old homely meaning in them. A certain quaintness there was, indeed, in the aspect of the place, but even Dora was obliged to confess that there was no more.

"And yet I shall be happy here in spite of you, you poor little room!" she thought, as she rose and dressed herself. "I never had such bed-curtains before. I shall remember that when I feel dull, and be thankful."

Those curtains were certainly peculiar, more peculiar than beautiful. Dora sat down on the edge of the bed to look at them. They were of a dull lilac tint, which many a washing had faded, and they represented the fortunes of the fair and much-tried Griselidis. Dora saw her standing at her father's door in humble, shepherdess attire; then came the noble wooer and his suite to bear the new marchioness away. Now Griselidis sits on a throne in state, and with rank and dignity begin her sorrows. Her children are taken from her, her husband grows unkind, and finally repudiates his too patient wife. Dora, who had raised the curtain to follow the story to its happy end, dropped it with some scorn as the last print showed her the Marquis of Saluces embracing his forgiving spouse.

"How I should have hated that man!" she thought, her bright eyes flashing. "Some sour old bachelor certainly had these curtains

first. What woman would choose such a subject for night or morning contemplation?"

She was dressed by this, and opened the window a little impatiently. Stranger still than within did everything without look to her unaccustomed eye. On the opposite side of the narrow street stood an old church, at the corner of a dark alley. It had long been disused for worship, and was now the storehouse of a large foundry. Through the open door Dora could see heaps of grapeshot and musket-balls lying on the dusty floor. The cold gray walls were stripped of all their ecclesiastical pageantry. The painted glass windows had long been shattered and walled up. Altar, pictures, flowers, and golden candlesticks were all gone, but high up near the roof Dora could still read the half-effaced words, "*Gloire à Dieu.*"

Above the gate stood a stone bishop in his mitre. The figure, though sadly mutilated, still stretched out a benignant hand to bestow the pastoral blessing. But the staff, emblem of authority, was broken in the other hand, which grasped but a useless fragment. Very brown and gray was the carved front of this dilapidated edifice. And yet the sad old ruin had a charm which struck Dora as being both quaint and graceful. The keeper of this place probably had a taste for flowers, for he had made himself a garden high up among the buttresses. A sort of terrace he had fashioned there; he had brought mould to it, and then filled it with stocks and lilies. Tall, white, and spotless rose the virgin flowers, looking very fair and pure against that sombre background. A vine, too, there was, that scattered its green arms about and hung over the street in festoons, which the light breath of the morning stirred gently.

The street itself was narrow, steep, and very old. It had been of some note in the days gone by. Presidents and members of the Parliament of Rouen had dwelt in those large

hotels, with quiet grass-grown courts in front and broad gardens behind. They were now the abode of manufacturers and of retired legal practitioners, who kept them in repair, but who cared to do no more. Everything was tranquil and silent. One house, more poorly inhabited than the rest, showed a few tokens of life. A green sign-board dangled from one of the second-floor windows, and informed the passers-by that Professor Didier lived within. A pale, thin old woman looked out for a few moments, then shut the window. A rosy boy appeared at another window on the third floor, and stared at Dora, but he too vanished, and the house became as silent and as quiet as its neighbors. In the street Dora saw two children lazily going to school, then a servant-girl in clattering sabots, who came back with a pail of water from a fountain that was almost underneath her window; but when the children had gone by, and the servant-girl had passed beneath a dark archway in the alley, not a soul was to be seen in the whole street, and not a sound was to be heard save the little flow and plash of the invisible water. Dora tried to see it, and leaned out, but she only caught sight of some stone carving with a green fern growing on the top of it, high out of the reach of rude hands.

"It will be very quiet," she thought.

Already a sort of torpor, the forerunner of the life she was to lead, stole over her. She looked down the street, and at its narrow close she saw the green hazy river, with a black boat gliding down; and thus looking and leaning on her window-sill, Dora fell into a vague yet not unpleasant reverie. The clear foreign sky, the strange city, and the quiet street, with its picturesque memorials of by-gone days, lulled thought to rest, and drove care away. The loss of some money seemed an event of little magnitude when compared with these impressive tokens of ruin and decay. Besides, Dora was still young, and as a

rule gold is neither youth's hope nor its desire. Other wishes, other longings than the sordid are they which haunt the heart of twenty-three.

"Well, my dear," said her mother's voice behind her, "how do you like this?"

Dora turned round, smiling brightly.

"It is very picturesque and peculiar," she replied.

"Picturesque and peculiar!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, with that little shrill raising of the voice by which she expressed astonishment. "My dear, it is simply enchanting. I have not felt so happy for years as I have felt since I came here; and Madame Bertrand is the most delightful old creature you ever saw!"

"Is she old?" demurely asked Dora.

"Is she old!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, with the little shrill raising of the voice again. "Old as the hills, but so good; only I suspect, my love, that she is a little touchy. She has been better off, you see, and feels it hard to have to wait upon us now. She made it a stipulation that she was to be called Madame Bertrand, and I came in to tell you so—I was afraid you might hurt her feelings inadvertently."

Dora promised to be careful, but expressed some wonder that Madame Bertrand should have undertaken to be their servant-of-all-work. Upon which it turned out that Madame Bertrand had undertaken no such thing; but had volunteered her services with restrictions so numerous that Dora was amused to hear them recapitulated by her mother. She promised, however, to attend to all this touchy lady's regulations. Mrs. Courtenay nodded, and at once resumed Madame Bertrand's praises. That lady, it seemed, had had a succession of lodgers.

"And they all adored her, save one," said Mrs. Courtenay. "He was a Monsieur Theodore, and after behaving abominably, coming in and going out at all hours, and calling her 'Bertrand,' quite short, as if she were a man,

he ran away without paying the poor old soul."

Dora laughed merrily.

"Do they do that in France too?" she asked.

"My dear, how can you be so simple! They do it everywhere. But it is a shame to impose on that poor old thing, who, from all she has told me about herself, must be one of the best creatures who ever breathed!"

Dora did not attempt to answer this. She knew it was her mother's habit to take her opinion of people from their own account of themselves. So she listened to Madame Bertrand's praises with an amused smile, but without other contradiction than the demure remark—

"I wonder if Monsieur Theodore made love to her."

"My dear, I tell you she is old—old!" remonstrated her mother; and in the same breath she informed her that breakfast was ready, Madame Bertrand having condescended so far as to prepare it.

Dora cast a quick, keen look around their sitting-room, as she sat down to breakfast. It was a clean, cold, and poor-looking apartment enough.

"But you shall have another look before the day is out," said Dora aloud. "I am talking to the room, aunt," she added, smiling at Mrs. Luan's startled face.

"Don't spend, Dora!" exclaimed Mrs. Luan, putting down her cup in alarm.

"Oh! I must; but it shall not be beyond pence. I know that shillings are forbidden now."

Mrs. Luan still looked uneasy, but did not venture on further remonstrance. When breakfast was over, Dora entered her room, unpacked her trunk, and took out some of those little toys which are the delight of a woman's heart. She had saved them from the wreck of her fortunes, not merely because

habit had endeared them to her, but because, though valuable of their kind, they would only have been swallowed in the great catastrophe, and would have brought in little or nothing at a sale. Within an hour the room, as Dora had told it, had another look. She had hung up a few water-color drawings on the walls, put up two brackets with the bronze heads of Shakespeare and Dante upon them, and for the dingy, common French porcelain vases, with artificial flowers in them, under glass globes, which adorned Madame Bertrand's black marble mantel-piece, Dora substituted two white and blue vases of genuine china, which she filled with fresh wall-flowers, bought from a woman in the street. This, and a work-basket on the table, a few books on a shelf, and here and there a little feminine trifle, so altered the aspect of the place, that when Mrs. Courtenay came out of her own room, and saw it again, she uttered a little scream of delight.

"You are a fairy!" she cried, clasping her hands in admiration.

"Twopence for nails, and twopence for flowers," triumphantly said Dora, looking at her aunt; "total, fourpence!"

Mrs. Luan was mute; but, if she had dared, she would have said that the fourpence were ill-spent.

The day had been a busy one for Dora, and toward the close she entered her room and sat down to rest by her open window. She looked at the old church, at the lilies, at the house where the professor lived, and she found them all quiet and silent as in the morning. The little rosy boy, whom she had already seen, was peeping at her from behind a window curtain, but when he saw her smiling face he disappeared. A glimpse of the professor's wife she also had, but it was a brief one. Madame Didier was looking out at her husband, a lame, infirm man, who walked down the street leaning heavily on his stick. She watched

him till he turned the corner of the street, then she shut her window, and was seen no more. Dora leaned back in her chair, with a book lying unopened on her lap. She could imagine from this day what her life would be. She would not have pictures to hang or brackets to put up daily, but daily she might, if she pleased, sit by her window and read, or sew, or look at the old church. Mrs. Courtenay was too delicate to take long walks, Mrs. Luan too indifferent, and they could not afford to hire carriages. She had been out for an hour alone, and she had caught a glimpse of Rouen. It looked a dull, grave, commercial city, with magnificent Gothic churches, but it also looked very dreary. Little light or cheerfulness was there in those ancient streets, over which huge mediæval piles shed their gloom.

"And we do not, know a soul here," she thought; "and if we stay years in Rouen, as we may, I shall spend those years in comparative solitude."

There was something almost appalling to Dora in the thought, and the evening of that first day was not calculated to contradict it.

It was a spring evening, hot as summer, yet they remained within, for whither should they have gone? Mrs. Luan, who never felt dull, perhaps because she never felt merry, was busy with her patchwork. Mrs. Courtenay at first talked in a very lively strain, and was enthusiastic about the pleasures of this new life, but gently fell asleep in the end. Dora looked at a flower-pot on the window-ledge, in which a weak shoot was attempting to send forth a pair of leaves.

"I suppose I shall have to take some interest in you," she thought; "but you are not animate enough for me. I wish one could make slips of living creatures, and watch them growing. It would be pleasant to see the tips of a pair of brown, furry ears shooting up, then bright eyes, then a round head, then the

rest of the creature; but the ears would be the really pretty part of it. I should like to have a kitten so, or a pup; but where is the use of liking anything more? I, who could not see a bird fly but I longed for it, must now learn to be as sober and demure as any nun."

In this austere mood, Dora took up a book and tried to read, but reading seemed to have lost its charm.

"I must study," she thought—"nothing else will do." So she went and fetched Dante, and did her best to fathom one of the most obscure of his difficult passages. But neither would that answer. Study cannot be taken up as a foil against passing tediousness. She is an austere mistress, and requires undivided worship. Besides, there rose sounds from below which disturbed Dora. Madame Bertrand had friends who spent the evening with her. Their loud talking and louder laughter came up to Dora as a sorrowful comment on the present, and a no less sorrowful remembrance of the past. She remembered joyous young days in Ireland, pleasant evenings between her brother Paul and her cousin, John Luan. She remembered evenings when she had conversed with the gifted and the wise during the brief year of her prosperity. That, too, had its charm, colder than that of her youth, but happy because intellectual. And now, how had it ended? She had lost the two friends of her girlhood; she had lost the intercourse which is so dear to an inquiring and cultivated mind, and she was the denizen of a strange city, thrown on her own resources, bound to live without a purpose or a task in life other than that of life itself—a dull and a hard prospect at twenty-three. But we do not all feel alike on these subjects. Madame Bertrand and her friends talked so loud, that Mrs. Courtenay awoke, and looked startled.

"Dear me!" she said, innocently, "I thought I was at one of our parties, and that

I had fallen asleep whilst Mr. Gray was telling me of a scientific experiment. It is such a relief to find it a dream! Poor Mr. Gray!—how he used to prose!"

"Thank Heaven, she regrets nothing!" thought Dora, with a smile.

"Do listen to these people laughing," good-humoredly continued Mrs. Courtenay. "You have no idea how cheerful my country-people are, Dora."

She spoke airily. It was plain that she appropriated the cheerfulness of Madame Bertrand and her friends, and made it her own for the time being.

"And so will I," resolutely thought Dora, with a little defiant shake of her bright head. "So will I."

Alas! it was very easily said—more easily said than done. When Dora went back to her room that evening, and looked at the prim and patient Griselidis, she wondered if *ennui* had ever been amongst the trials of that lady's lot.

CHAPTER IX.

A BRAVE heart will go through more than Dora had to bear. After all, her lot was not so hard. She had the shelter of a roof, daily bread, raiment, all the things that thousands struggle for so wearily, and can so seldom win. She had these, and with them leisure, a few books, the companionship of two beings who loved her, and a happy, sunny temper, to make all good. If she sometimes heaved a little regretful sigh, it was because she was still young, you see, and did not know the wonderful blessings of peace. Give her a few years more, and let her go forth and be tossed in some lonely boat on the waves of life, and how she will look back to this safe haven, and pine for its sweet shelter! Happy girl! Neither passion which is wasting, nor sorrow which is cruel, nor care which is remorseless,

is with you now. So this is still your golden time, and these are still your halcyon days, though Rouen is rather a gloomy city to live in.

But though Dora, more through temperament than from any philosophical appreciation of the blessings which remained to her, was happy and contented; though Madame Bertrand said it did one good to see the demoiselle's bright face, and grew poetic with her neighbors when she once broached that theme; though everything, in short, seemed as it should be, still Dora heaved that little regretful sigh we have spoken of. It came probably because no human life can be free from it. We may be sure that on the day when Napoleon was crowned in Notre Dame he heaved a sigh for Corsican hills, or for having eaten cherries with a pretty girl in an orchard when he was sub-lieutenant—for any thing, in short, which he had no more. It is the mortal lot to repine. Saints fret over their sins, and sinners lament their lost follies, and every one has suffered some deprivation or other. Dora's was money, and with money the loss of comforts, and pleasures, and enjoyments, which that modern lamp of Aladdin summons forth at its bidding from the dark recesses of life, where they sleep so soundly, so far as the needy are concerned. The cruel enchanter Brown had taken her lamp away; the spell was gone, and some trouble was the result. On most days she defied her fate, and forbade it to vex her; and on other days, as we said, she sighed.

Her mother and her aunt, who shared her loss, did not deny its existence, but they were not prepared to sympathize with Dora when she felt dull now and then. The sound of her native language had not yet lost its charm for Mrs. Courtenay, and Mrs. Luan professed herself delighted with the cheapness of Rouen. So Dora behaved like a true stoic. She endured and did not complain.

Rouen is a picturesque city, and Dora liked the picturesque, and found and made herself pleasures out of it. The solemn gloom of Notre Dame and Saint Ouen, the glorious painted glass in Saint Vincent and Saint Patrice, the wonderful façade of Saint Maclou, or the exquisite court of the Palais de Justice, gave her many a 'delightful hour. But one cannot live upon architecture, and Dora often felt restless, and scarcely happy, even though these magnificent memorials of the past were daily within her view. She missed something—something which Athens itself, and the Acropolis, which glimpses of Olympus and Mount Athos could not have supplied. The open space and border of heath, the view of a gleaming or stormy sea, which she had had from her mother's cottage in Ireland, often came back to her with a sort of passion. Oh! that sad memory did not stand between her and that past! For a year back again in the old country, with the bracing sea air, and with it the breath of liberty, far, far away from those grand frowning Gothic heaps of stone.

Rouen has few attractions as a modern city—and they were fewer then than they are now—and these Dora quickly exhausted. The theatres she did not visit, her mother did not care for excursions, and the feminine delight of looking in at shop windows she seldom indulged in. She was still young, and not insensible to the charms of elegant and costly attire. So it was rather hard to see velvet and silks which she must now never wear, or jewels that could no longer be hoped for as a good yet to come. The gate of all luxurious enjoyment was closed upon her; and if Dora was not wise enough to scorn such vanities, she was too proud to indulge in weak and useless regret.

To stay very much within was therefore one of the features of her lot, and such tranquillity is utterly obnoxious to youth. She sometimes longed for motion with a feverish restlessness.

She did her best to conquer the unquiet mood, and she tried to make herself home pleasures, but this was no easy matter. Madame Bertrand's cat did indeed steal up to her, but she only slept and purred. So Dora made friends with a host of sparrows, whose nests were in the old church. She bribed them with crumbs, and soon so tamed them that they would come and flutter past her open window, and, if she sat very still, peck on the ledge whilst she looked on. She also opened a flirtation with the little rosy boy in the opposite house, and she seldom appeared at her window but he was to be seen at his, laughing and nodding to her. A silent interest she likewise took in the doings of the lame professor and his pale wife; and altogether she made the best of her lot, but, as we have said, she could not help feeling restless now and then.

That unquiet mood had been very strong upon her on a bright day in summer, when, in the afternoon, Mrs. Courtenay suddenly expressed the wish to partake of some Fromage de Brie.

"I should like it, oh! of all things," she exclaimed, raising her voice in her little shrill tone.

Dora looked up from her work, and supposed the wish was one her mother could gratify.

"Oh! no," was the slightly plaintive reply, "I would not touch one of the cheeses they sell about here; and Madame Bertrand's woman lives miles away, at the other end of Rouen—miles away!"

"I shall go and fetch you a cheese, mamma," quickly said Dora, throwing down her work.

"My dear, it is ever so far away. Oh! so far—miles!"

"Then it is the very thing for me," gayly said Dora. "I feel just now as if I should like to go to the edge of the world and look over."

"My dear!" expostulated her mother.

"I should!" wilfully said Dora. "Oh! for one good peep out of this world, and to see the stars spinning!"

The journey to fetch the cheese Mrs. Courtenay longed for promised no such prospect, and was described by Madame Bertrand as something formidable; but Dora was bent on going, and she went.

She had not walked ten steps when, as she passed the house where the lame teacher lived, she heard a groan of distress coming from beneath the archway. The gate, as is usually the case on the Continent, stood wide open, and Dora put her head in and saw a lamentable picture. A little woman, very old, and very poorly dressed, was sitting on the last step of the stone staircase, staring at half-a-dozen of broken eggs and some spilt milk. An earthen bowl and a plate also lay in fragments near her.

"Can I help you?" asked Dora.

"Can you pick up milk," was the sharp retort, "or mend broken eggs?"

"Yes," good-humoredly replied Dora, "I think I can do both."

"I had not tasted a drop of milk, or seen the yolk of an egg, since I lost my five-franc piece," groaned the old woman, without heeding her; "and now that I had saved and saved till I could have an egg again, I stumbled, and there they are, dish and all—dish and all! There they are!"

Dora stooped and carefully picked up two of the eggs, which had escaped with a gentle crack.

"These will do," she said, softly laying them on a fragment of the plate; "and for the other four and the milk here is a cure."

She put her hand in her pocket and took out a few pence; but the old woman shook her head.

"Have eggs and milk got feet?" she asked. "Will they come? I cannot go and fetch

them—no, I cannot, I am too tired,” she added, as if Dora were attempting to persuade her.

“You are but a cross old fairy,” thought Dora; “but still you shall have your way, and I will see if I cannot make you happy.”

So she took back the money which she had put in the old woman’s lap, and she went away.

The little old woman remained sitting on the step of the staircase groaning over the broken eggs and the spilt milk, and addressing them with impotent wrath.

“You did it on purpose,” she said, shaking her head at them, “you know you did!”

“Did they, though?” said some one, coming in from the street. “That was too bad of them.”

“Go your way,” was her angry reply. “Go to your old frippery, and let me be quiet. Don’t touch them,” she almost screamed, as, in going up the staircase, the stranger seemed likely to tread on the two eggs which Dora had put on the broken plate. “She is bringing me more; but I will have these too.”

Even as she spoke Dora appeared underneath the archway, followed by a child with a cup full of milk, and four eggs on a plate.

“There,” she said, gayly, “they did come to you, after all; and they are all yours, the cup, the plate, the milk, and the eggs,” she added, taking them from the child’s hand to present them to her.

“The cup too?” screamed the old woman.

“Yes, yes, the cup too,” replied Dora, gravely. “Are you glad?”

“Ravished!” was the ardent reply; “enchanted! Oh! the beautiful cup! Why, who are you?” she suddenly exclaimed, glancing from the gifts to the giver, and shading her eyes with her hand to see her better.

Dora stood before her bright and smiling, with her little donations in her hands. She saw that her *protégée* was dazzled with her

blooming, radiant face, and it amused her. To charm animals, allure children, and conquer ill-tempered people, was her gift; she knew it, and she liked it. “I thought I should prevail over you,” was her triumphant, though unspoken boast, as the old woman still stared like one confused.

“Good-by,” she said, aloud; “the child shall carry these up for you,” and handing both milk and eggs to the little girl who had brought them, Dora nodded and went her way.

“Who is she, eh?” asked the receiver of the milk and eggs.

“She lives opposite,” replied the child, glibly; “and she sits at her window. Such a beautiful demoiselle!”

Unconscious of her double triumph, Dora went on her way. The distance was great, but it was reached at last. Dora bought the cheese, and with the precious dainty carefully wrapped up, so that no untoward accident should cause it to break, she turned homeward. The cheesemonger lived very far away, and the sun was now near its setting. As Dora went down a steep street, she saw all Rouen beneath her. It was a picture! Many a poor, struggling artist, living in a dull, smoky city, would give a year of his life to have the chance of painting such a one. The gleaming river, now dark purple, now flowing gold, wound through the old town, and passed beneath the bridges; church towers and spires rose above the dark sea of roofs, and appeared in fine clear lines on a sky of pale azure; luxuriant verdure and rounded hills framed the magic picture over which spread a haze both soft and bright. It was beautiful, wonderfully beautiful, and Dora stopped and gazed in deep admiration. But neither that nor the long walk which had tired her could quell the restlessness within her. She had brought it out, and she was taking it back. Her life was a dull life, and Dora had tasted another life

than this. She had had a life full of fervor and hope with her lost brother in Ireland; she had had a life of intellectual pursuits and social pleasures in London, and now she was lingering the last bright years of youth away in a French provincial town. In short, Dora felt not merely restless, but dull.

It is sad to say it, but more than one-half of the human species, womankind, is sorely troubled with that modern complaint of dulness. After all, there was some good in the olden time, when men fought and strove, and women sat at home and spun wool, and both liked it. Yes, there was a philosophy in the spindle and distaff, or in the silk and worsted, no doubt about it. When Matilda and her maidens sat down to their tapestry and worked in tent-stitch the history of the Norman Conquest, they were thus saved many a trouble and many a weary hour. Of course there was sorrow in these days, and there was love too, easy, natural love, which came and went like a gentle epidemic; but we doubt if these mediæval women were haunted with the ideal, or if they made their moan because they failed to secure variety. Peace, which we prize so little, was one of their blessings. A calm and tranquil life they led in the main. Strong walls were raised, and men wore heavy armor, that these ladies might sit in quiet and work on canvas strange warriors on gaunt horses, or quaint trees, with birds never known out of fable perched on the boughs. We have improved all that, to be sure; but then let us not complain if we are called upon to pay the penalty of the improvement.

Vain admonition! Dora had a warm, genial nature; she loved her mother and she liked her aunt, but she longed for a life in which there should be some other purpose than to make the two ends of a narrow income meet.

That longing was strong upon her as she stood and looked at dusk gathering over the city below her. With a sigh at its useless-

ness, she roused herself from her reverie, and went down the street at a quick pace. To reach home sooner she took a short cut through one of the narrow lanes that were to be found within the shadow of Notre Dame. A gray twilight still reigned there. As she passed by one of the low shops, with beetling first-floors over them, Dora saw some books on a stall outside. Had she ever seen them there before? It seemed not to her. The shop was not a mere second-hand bookseller's shop; many wares were sold within it. There were portfolios of drawings in stands inside near the door; in a corner she saw some old portraits, with fixed eyes staring through the gloom. A few plates of old Rouen ware, a worm-eaten box of carved wood, a shattered Etruscan vase, and a heap of ancient tapestry, appeared in the window above the book-stall. At once Dora's thoughts flew back to the days when her brother and she were engaged in the catalogue. She paused and looked at that old *bric-à-brac* shop with a sad, troubled eye. Oh, ye days gone by, how you can haunt us! It was a pain to linger there, and yet Dora could not bear to go. A light burned in the shop; its rays fell on the stall outside. She took up a book to stay and look a little longer. The book itself woke kindred recollections. She remembered how she had once provoked her brother Paul with a piece of girlish folly, and how he had answered her with a "Read Epictetus—read Epictetus"—a tantalizing injunction, since he read it in the classic original. Now the book Dora had taken up was an old French translation of Epictetus. Her heart beat as she opened its pages; then, as she glanced over them, and read a few maxims, the calm and divine wisdom of the Phrygian slave won on her by its beauty.

"I wonder if the book is a dear one?" she thought.

She hesitated a while, then ventured into

the shop with the volume in her hand. The dealer was not alone. There was a customer with him, a slender, dark man, for whom he held a candle in a dingy iron candlestick.

"Pray how much may this book cost?" asked Dora.

The man turned round, and said, civilly,

"What book, mademoiselle, if you please?"

"Epictetus," she answered.

The customer, who was gazing intently at an old engraving, now looked up as he heard this girlish voice uttering the name of the stoic philosopher, and there was just a touch of perplexity in his glance as he saw Dora. You would scarcely have connected philosophy under any shape with her open, genial face. Thus, bright, hopeful, and young might have looked a Psyche before her sorrows.

"Ten francs," was the dealer's reply.

Dora had made up her mind to give so much as one franc for the volume, but ten made her blush with confusion at having entered the shop at all.

"I did not think it was so expensive," she said, apologetically.

He saw her embarrassment, and replied, good-naturedly, that the edition was a rare one. Dora, who was reluctantly putting the book by, brightened up. Had he got a cheaper edition?

"No," and he shook his head, "he had not; and what was more, Epictetus was rather a scarce book. Few people cared about it."

Dora apologized for having troubled him, and left the shop. The dealer looked after her and chuckled.

"Whenever an out-of-the-way book is asked of me," he said, turning to his customer, "it is by your country-folk, Doctor Richard, and especially by your countrywomen. To think of a little chicken like that wanting to peck at Epictetus!"

"Who is she?" asked Doctor Richard;

and he made good his claim to be Dora's countryman by a moderate yet unmistakable accent.

"I do not know her name, but I often see her about Notre Dame. A pretty girl, eh, Doctor Richard?"

"Not very pretty," dryly replied Doctor Richard, "but very bright. She lit up your shop, Monsieur Merand."

"Come, you shall have another candle," said Monsieur Merand, taking the hint. "You must see that engraving well in order to appreciate it."

He entered the dark parlor behind his shop. Doctor Richard remained alone, and he wondered.

"Where can I have seen this girl, who wants to buy Epictetus, with that joyous face? It was she who was giving milk and eggs to the cross old witch on the staircase, but I knew then that I had already seen her. When and where was it?"

Doctor Richard's memory was one tenacious of faces, and it never deceived him. Yes, he had certainly seen and been struck with that bright face, "with eyes so fair," like Collins's Hope, before this day. Suddenly the remembrance flashed across his mind. He had seen her at a concert six months ago, a bright, happy, and admired girl. He remembered her looks, and her smiles, and her bouquet of rare roses on her lap—rare for the season of the year. He remembered, too, some unknown lady's comment, "Miss Courtenay is the most extravagant girl. Now, these roses cost a guinea, at least." And now Epictetus was too dear at ten francs. And the milk and eggs, moreover, suggested a strange contrast between the present and the past. The story of her losses Doctor Richard had also heard, and thinking over it, he fell into a fit of musing, whence Monsieur Merand, returning at length with the candle, roused him. But the engraving, on being seen more closely,

proved what Doctor Richard was pleased to call "an impostor." He put it down with a great show of contempt, and looked for his hat,

"Well, then, have 'Epictetus,'" said Monsieur Merand, thrusting the book toward him.

"Not I," curtly replied Doctor Richard.

"Good-night, Monsieur Merand; you must keep better wares if you want my custom."

"He will come for it to-morrow," said Monsieur Merand, composedly, putting the engraving aside; "and I dare say he will take Epictetus as well. I saw him looking at it."

CHAPTER X.

MRS. COURTENAY was getting uneasy when her daughter came home.

"My dear, how long you were!" she said, with a sigh of relief.

"It is very far away. But the cheese is perfect, and—" here Dora paused in dismay. The cheese might be a first-rate one, and was so, no doubt, but it was no longer in her possession. She had probably left it at the *bric-à-brac* shop.

"I looked at a book-stall near Notre Dame," she said, feeling Mrs. Luan's reproving eye upon her, "and I must have forgotten it there. I shall go back for it at once. Pray don't wait tea for me."

She was gone before Mrs. Courtenay could remonstrate. Within a few minutes Dora had reached Monsieur Merand's shop. She entered it after first casting a look at the book-stall, and ascertaining that neither Epictetus nor the cheese was there.

"You come for Epictetus?" he said, recognizing her at once.

"No, sir, I come for a parcel which I forgot."

"There is no parcel. Take Epictetus for nine francs, eh?"

"It is still too dear at that price, thank you. I am sure I left my parcel here."

She looked for it, but without assisting her Monsieur Merand went on:

"Let us make an exchange, mademoiselle. Have you got an old engraving? I am very fond of an old engraving. Look, here is a stock of them!"

He opened a portfolio, so that Dora could not help seeing its contents.

"These are not engravings," she said; "these are crayon drawings—and very bad ones too," she added, shutting up the portfolio, and again looking for her missing cheese.

"Bad!" exclaimed Monsieur Merand, throwing the portfolio open once more—"you call these bad! Then, mademoiselle," he added, taking off his hat to her with a mock politeness, which was not impertinent, "I will make you a present of Epictetus if you can do me a head like this."

Dora smiled a little scornfully. She drew tolerably well, and she knew it; but not choosing to enter into an argument with Monsieur Merand, she quietly remarked that as he had not got her parcel she would trouble him no longer.

"Is this your parcel?" he asked, taking it from the chair on which it had lain concealed all the time; "why," he added, smelling it and looking at her, "it is cheese!"

Dora began to think that this Monsieur Merand was a very odd man; but he looked both good-humored and good-natured, spite his oddity, and she could not help laughing.

"It is cheese," she said; "but pray give it to me, sir, I am in a hurry."

"This is a particularly good cheese," he continued in a pensive tone. "Now," he added, giving it up to her and putting his hands behind his back, "it is a pity you cannot draw;

I would have let you have Epictetus for a crayon sketch like this;" and he took and flourished one before her eyes.

"I wonder if the man is jesting, or if he would really buy my drawings?" thought Dora, suddenly fluttered at the golden vision thus opened to her.

"I suppose, sir, you are in earnest?" she remarked doubtfully.

"To be sure I am; but can you draw?"

He already seemed to hesitate and draw back.

"I have one or two things by me," said Dora, still doubting his sincerity; "shall I show them to you to-morrow?"

"Perhaps you had better not," kindly replied Monsieur Merand. "I am a severe critic, and—and we all know how young ladies draw."

"I care nothing about criticism," emphatically declared Dora; "besides, I can keep to my own opinion, you know, which is, that I can produce something much better than this."

Monsieur Merand's breath seemed gone at the audacious confession; but Dora, without waiting for him to recover and utter some other discouraging speech, bade him a good-evening, took up her cheese, and walked out of the shop.

Even Mrs. Luan noticed how bright and excited Dora looked when she came back.

"Did you get it?" cried Mrs. Courtenay.

"Here it is," replied Dora, gayly; "and what is more," she added, tossing off her bonnet and shaking her bright head, "I think I am going to earn cheeses by the dozen!" She laughed at their amazed looks, and related to them what had passed, adding saucily, "And my drawings are a great deal better than his. It would not take me more than two days to draw such a head as he showed me. Now, suppose he gave me ten francs a head, that would be a hundred and fifty francs a month, or eighteen hundred francs a year. Nay, as

to that, I could produce a drawing a day, which would make three thousand francs a year."

Mrs. Luan put down her patchwork and stared; whilst Mrs. Courtenay said innocently,

"Three hundred and sixty-five drawings a year!"

Dora looked bewildered at this unexpected calculation, then she remarked in a much more sober tone:

"Well, I suppose Monsieur Merand would scarcely take a drawing a day. No, nor yet one every other day. But then, he may give me more than ten francs a drawing, you see. I shall certainly try him to-morrow," she added, sitting down to take her tea with the composure of an old woman of business.

They were all three rather elated at this unexpected prospect. Epictetus, who had led to this, could afford to despise money, live in a garret, sleep on a straw mattress, and never lock his door; but Dora had not yet reached these sublime heights of philosophy. Money was much to her. Money meant a little of that pleasure and relaxation which was the grievous want of her new life; money, too, in this case meant exertion, and a motive for it; no wonder then that Dora looked once more as bright as sunshine, and spent a restless, hopeful night, full of projects and dreams, some sleeping and some waking.

Nevertheless, Miss Courtenay felt in no great hurry to try her fortunes when the next day came round. She took out her portfolio, selected the best drawing in it, and looked at it in doubt. Was it, after all, so good as she had thought it to be? Mrs. Courtenay, who felt very impatient to know Monsieur Merand's opinion of her daughter's production, urged her to go to his shop early; but, Dora prudently said, "It would not be dignified," and she lingered until she suddenly discovered that if she did not go at once, it would be too late to go at all. So she slipped her portfolio under

her arm, and went out alone, though Mrs. Courtenay first, then Mrs. Luan afterward, offered to accompany her.

"No," decisively said Dora; "I will not undertake Monsieur Merand in company."

She went, and her mother, and even her aunt, looked out of the window after her. Dora saw them, and nodded and smiled and looked very brave, though her heart beat a little. She walked briskly whilst she was within view, but slackened her pace when once she had turned the corner of the street. To say the truth, she felt an arrant coward. "I wonder what takes me to that Monsieur Merand," she thought; "I could do without Epictetus, and live without that odd man's money. Perhaps he was only laughing at me yesterday, and that I shall have had a sleepless night and a useless walk for my pains."

"The milk and eggs were very good, mademoiselle," said a cracked voice; "very good; and the cup is beautiful!"

Dora raised her eyes, which were bent on the earth, and saw the little old woman whose distress she had relieved the day before.

"I am glad of it," she replied, with a smile.

"And what is your name, mademoiselle?" promptly asked the old woman, leaning her head toward her right shoulder, and looking up at Dora with a keen, brown eye, that bore no token of age.

"I cannot tell it you," mysteriously answered Dora; "I am a princess in disguise, and it is a great secret; but," she good-humoredly added, noticing the old woman's blank look, "I know where you live, and I shall go and see you."

"Do!" cried the old woman, brightening. "The third door on the right hand on the fourth floor."

"You poor little fairy," thought Dora, looking after her, as the little old woman passed beneath the archway, and entered the house where she had seen her yesterday, "you have

seen better days, I am sure. And I wish you were a fairy indeed, for then you would give me wonderful luck in exchange for my milk and eggs. Whereas I do believe I am only going to get a humiliating rebuff."

She had half a mind to turn back as she entered Monsieur Merand's street. But it was too late to do so. Monsieur Merand stood at his door, he had seen her, and nodded recognition in a half-friendly, half-ironical fashion. At least, so thought Dora.

"Oh! you have brought the drawing," he said, as she approached.

He glanced at the portfolio under her arm.

"Yes," carelessly replied Dora, entering the shop. "I hope you did not sell Epictetus," she added, composedly, perhaps to impress the dealer with the fact that Epictetus was the summit of her ambition.

Monsieur Merand shook his head compassionately, and Dora understood his meaning quite well. Of course he had not sold Epictetus, but of course he did not expect to part with it to her in exchange for her labor. She began to feel annoyed at his impertinent skepticism, and somewhat defiantly she opened her portfolio and handed him the sketch.

"Oh! that is it, is it?" said Monsieur Merand, taking it from her hand, and moving to the door, in order to have as much light as the street afforded full on the drawing. Dora remained in the gloomy background, and looked at him with a beating heart.

Her drawing was taken from a cast of Michael Angelo's famous "Night." The weary goddess hung her head, heavy with sleep, and seemed to forget the cares, the sorrows, and the sins of life, in those deep slumbers. A repose, which was not that of death, for there was suffering in it still, wrapped the whole figure, and was well expressed in the bowed head. Monsieur Merand looked long and attentively, then he put the drawing down, went to the other end of his shop, and came back

with a book, which he silently placed in Dora's hands. She looked at it, though she truly had no need to look. It was Epictetus.

There are delightful moments in life, moments of boasting and triumph, which we never forget. Dora had a genial, happy nature, keenly susceptible of emotion, as all such natures are. Her heart beat with joy at this little success; her eyes sparkled, and, alas! for stoic philosophy, old Epictetus shook a little in her hands. It was not vanity, it was not pride, it was the knowledge that she had prevailed, that she, too, possessed a gift, and that this gift was worth something. She could not speak, she could not trust herself to say one word—her stammering tongue might have betrayed her. Monsieur Merand addressed her first.

"Of course," he said, "the professor touched up that drawing—but it is no business of mine. The drawing is a good one, and a bargain is a bargain."

This gave Dora her tongue back again.

"Indeed, sir," she replied, a little saucily, "I thought you were too good a judge not to know when a drawing had been 'touched up,' or not. This drawing never underwent such treatment."

"It is yours—all yours?" exclaimed Monsieur Merand, in the tone of a question.

"I do not say that," replied Dora, not unwilling to mystify him; "but I say that it is the work of one hand."

Monsieur Merand's face fell.

"Then you have no more such?" he said, seeming rather annoyed.

"I did not say that either," retorted Dora, much amused. "Do you really wish for more?"

"Let us deal openly," suggested Monsieur Merand, putting on a look of great candor. "I care not who does these drawings, but will you let me have more by the same hand—say two to begin with?"

"But not for ten francs a piece," suggested Dora, looking grave.

"No, this and the others shall be twenty. Epictetus and fifty francs for the three."

"Very well," replied Dora, after a pause, seemingly given to deliberation, but really afforded to joy. "Are you in a hurry?"

"I should like them this week. To-day is Tuesday—say by Saturday, eh?"

"Very well," again answered Miss Courtenay, doing her best to look careless and business-like. "Good-morning, sir."

She gave Monsieur Merand a pretty, condescending nod; "for he must be in my power, and not I in his," she thought, as she leisurely walked down the street, till she reached a side-door of Notre Dame, which she entered.

Dora felt happy, and happiness with her at once found its way into prayer and thanksgiving. The grand old church, with its mighty columns and gorgeous windows, could not awe her, or turn her joy into other channels. Yes, life is brief, and eternity awaits us all; but life is sweet, too, and its joys are keen, and gladness, also, is a form of worship. So Dora felt; but a sunbeam stealing in, lighting up the aisle, and falling on a grave-stone, whence the word "Requiescat" suddenly seemed to flash forth, turned Dora's joy to chill and sad regret. Requiescat! The word was written on Paul's grave, in Glasnevin. She triumphed, she had her little joy and her little boast, and he had been denied his. He had gone down to his premature rest, and he slept too early a sleep because of that disappointment.

"Oh! my brother!—my brother!" thought Dora, her tears flowing at the thought, "how can I be happy and forget you?"

But did she really forget him? Was not his remembrance ever in her heart, ready to rise at the first whisper? Did she not remember him in joy, because he did not share it; in sorrow, because he would have borne it with her; in every thing of weal or woe, which

stirred her heart or passed through her life. If she now lingered in that ancient church, was it not to think in peace of him? When she roused herself with a "I must go in," it was with a sort of pain; so dear was that thought, so hard it was to bid it once more return to those depths of her heart where it slumbered, indeed, but ever ready to waken!

"Well!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, from the window.

Dora looked up, and saw her mother's face looking down at her. She laughed saucily, showed her the book, and sprang up-stairs. No sunbeam was brighter than Dora when she broke in upon her mother and her aunt.

"Victory, victory!" she cried, clapping her hands, after throwing poor Epictetus on the nearest chair. "Monsieur Merand gives me twenty francs a drawing, and wants two more by Saturday. We shall be quite rich now, and Pactolus—is it Pactolus?—is going to flow in the room."

"That is delightful!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, with her little shrill raising of the voice. "Oh! quite delightful!"

"Mrs. Luan, who looked a little flushed and excited, stared hard at Dora, and said,

"Where is the money?"

"I have not got it yet, aunt. By next Saturday I hope to show you two Napoleons and a half. I wonder what drawings I ought to let him have."

She brought out her portfolio, and the three looked over its contents. Dora selected a Niobe and a Dying Gladiator, Mrs. Courtenay opined for a Sleeping Ariadne and a Cupid, and Mrs. Luan reckoned up Dora's drawings, and valuing each at twenty francs apiece, made up, mentally of course, a goodly sum.

"The Ariadne is much better than the Niobe, my dear," said Mrs. Courtenay, nodding her cap emphatically.

Dora looked at the two as only artists can look at their own work. She liked them both,

and now that she had a market for them, she regretted parting with them. She remembered how that sleeping woman, unconscious of abandonment, had charmed her; how the meaning of that fine antique had stolen upon her, the more she studied it. And then the Niobe! The immortal sorrow in those up-raised eyes, and in those parted lips!

"Let them both go," she said, with a little sigh, and putting them away as she spoke. "I shall keep the Cupid and the Dying Gladiator—for another time, if, as I hope, Monsieur Merand will want them. And now, mamma, since I am getting rich again, we shall take drives in the country, and you and aunt must get a silk dress each, and I shall try books, and hire a piano."

Mrs. Luan's patchwork fell from her hands on her lap, and she stared at Dora with unmitigated astonishment. Had the girl gone crazy, for how could she expect to achieve all this with fifty francs?

Dora laughed a clear, ringing laugh.

"I will do all that, aunt," she said wilfully, "and a great deal more. I wonder what old Epictetus has to say on the subject?"

She took up the volume, and sitting with it on her lap by the open window, she soon became absorbed and grave. Epictetus spoke of virtue, of heroism, endurance, and self-denial, but said not one word of drives in the country, silk dresses, or musical instruments of any kind.

CHAPTER XI.

THE event proved Dora to have been in her senses when she foretold the golden results which were to accrue from her connection with Monsieur Merand. He took the Niobe and the Ariadne without hesitation, and asked for more.

"I have got a Cupid and a Dying Gladi-

ator," replied Dora, with a gentle thrill of emotion.

"Will you let me see them?" asked Monsieur Merand, rather eagerly.

"Yes, to-morrow," she answered, quietly.

She brought them the next morning. Monsieur Merand purchased them at once, put them away very carefully in a portfolio, then said, gravely:

"Mademoiselle, could you copy in crayons a few heads from a painting in our gallery here?"

"I can try."

"Then you are not sure?"

"I can try," said Dora again; and her bright smile expressed the certainty of success.

"Well, then, here is the catalogue; this is the picture—Hemmeling's. The heads are marked; size of the original. Take your time, mademoiselle. I am in no hurry, and should like the drawings to be good."

"I shall do my best," answered Dora, with a wistful look, for she already felt less confident of success. Instead of going home, she went straight to the Musée. With a beating heart she passed by the majestic front of Saint Ouen, and turning round the edifice, found herself in its deep shadow, facing the narrow door which leads to the picture-gallery. Sight-seers were scarce that day; Dora met none. She went up the broad stone staircase alone, and went in the mood of one going to meet her fate. These pictures, which she had often looked at with a calm critical eye, now seemed to her like so many judges waiting for her, the future culprit. The door of the library was open; within, a broad cool room, Dora could see a few gentlemen reading. She remembered the days of Mr. Ryan's library, and Paul's eager labors and sad failure, and she quailed to think that she, too, perhaps, was bent on a task beyond her strength.

She looked around her for comfort, and

found none. The statues which adorn the hall, the severe Augustus, the writhing Laocoon, the cold Pudicitia, had little sympathy with a girl's trouble or with her fears. What did the Roman emperor care for the triumph or defeat of her little ambition? What was it to the victim of Apollo's revenge that she failed or succeeded? As for Pudicitia, she would surely have said, if consulted by Miss Courtenay, "Stay at home and spin wool."

"What is there between these Greeks and Romans that they should meet us at every path?" thought Dora, a little resentfully; "They can soothe no grief, raise no hope, dispel no trouble. Why have we not, then, the images of our own flesh and blood, of our own heroes around us, like the painter below with his pallet in his marble hand? It would be cheering to see a Bernard de Palissy there instead of that Laocoon and his heathen serpents. Poor and little as I am, that obstinate Bernard, who fought so hard a battle, is kith and kin to me, and these are nothing—oh! surely nothing!" and still she stood with the catalogue in her hand, hesitating to enter the rooms, within which, in her present mood at least, her fate seemed to lie. True, failure would not be ruin, but it would be humiliation, and that surely has its bitterness.

But when Dora entered the sunlit rooms, and wandered through them, looking at the quaint old pictures with their stiff, staring faces, she felt hopeful once more. It did not seem so very hard to prevail and get the better of these grim personages. Yet how fine, when you looked into them, were some, and how correct was Monsieur Merand's taste! Every head he had chosen had its character and its beauty.

"If he is so good a judge," thought Dora, "I shall get afraid of him."

But fear is not a logical feeling. Dora, as she looked over Monsieur Merand's selection, felt cheerful, and not despondent. Her buoy-

ant nature rose with the magnitude of the task laid upon her. That would be a tame journey of adventure indeed which should have no path beset with perils. The toil that has no difficulties surely has no charm.

On her way home, Dora resolved to go and see the old fairy, as she mentally called her. The poor woman's real name was Nanette—so Dora had learned; also, that Nanette bore an unexceptionable character for everything save temper.

"I am sure she is lucky," thought Dora, climbing up the dingy staircase that led to Nanette's room. "The eggs I gave her are fast turning into gold, and as for the milk, we all know it is the symbol of abundance."

Nanette's door was open, so Dora had no trouble in finding her. Nanette lived in a room which was about the size of a large cupboard, but which was exquisitely clean and neat, and Nanette, being as small and as neat and as clean as her room, looked more than ever like a fairy, in Dora's opinion. A cross fairy she was just then, scolding a charcoal fire, which would not kindle.

"Ah! you will not, eh?" she said, angrily, and vainly using a bellows beyond her strength—"you know I am old, you do!"

"Let me try," said Dora, looking in.

She took the bellows from Nanette's hand, and lo! in a trice the fire was bright.

"Yes, you are young," said Nanette, with a wistful look, "and you can work. I cannot!—I cannot! I am seventy-three, and I cannot work, and have to live on charity," she added, with an angry flash in her brown eye.

Dora tried to soothe her, but Nanette would admit of no consolation. Her temper was roused again. Dora wanted her to have more milk and eggs, but Nanette scorned the offer. "She took charity, but she was not a beggar," she said, loftily. "An accident was an accident, but she did not want milk and eggs daily."

Dora suggested bacon, but greatly imperilled

her power of fascination by doing so. Nanette's brown eye burned like a live coal. It turned out that bacon was her particular aversion.

"Yes, you are a cross fairy," thought Dora, "but for all that, I shall prevail over you once more." So she made no further offers, but gently drew out Nanette. She learned how Nanette had been rich—quite rich. She had earned as much as seventy francs in one month by lace-mending, but now her eyesight was gone, and her hand was unsteady, and there were days when Nanette could not get up, she was so weak, and then she lay sleepless all night. "When the moon shone in at her window, and lit up her room, it was well and good; but when the night was dark, and the room was black, it was very dreary, you see."

Dora's bright eyes flashed with triumph.

"I shall give you a pound of candles," she said.

Nanette was fairly conquered. Candles were the secret desire of her heart. Even pride and ill-temper could not reject such a boon. She put her withered hand on Dora's, and looked up in her face.

"I shall show it to you," she said. "Doctor Richard wants it, but I would not let him see it—not I; but *you* shall see it!"

She unlocked a square box on the floor, fumbled in it, then drew out a velvet case, which she opened, but jealously kept in her hand. Dora might look, but by no means touch. This treasure, which was a treasure indeed, was an ancient and exquisite enamel portrait. It showed Dora a young girl in all the bloom and radiance of youth, and with hair of a golden brown.

"Yes," said Nanette, as Dora gave a little start, "it is like you; you have the same hair—I saw that at once. And she was a great, great lady, and my great-great-grandmother, too," added Nanette, "and no one shall have it!" she angrily continued, shutting up the

case, and putting away the portrait hurriedly; "and he shall not even see it!" she said, with a sort of scream, meant for Doctor Richard.

"My poor old fairy!" thought Dora, as she left Nanette, and went down the staircase, "I fear your luck is all for me, and that you can keep none for yourself. Are you indeed the descendant of that bright-looking lady in rich blue velvet? You may have mended the exquisite point your great-great-grandmother, as you call her, wore round her white neck, and been paid for your labor by the great-great-grand-daughter of her chambermaid. And that lady's face and mine are not unlike. I never was so pretty, but still there is a sort of national likeness. Who knows but the original was the daughter of some Irish Jacobite who came over with James Stuart? I may be Nanette's seventeenth cousin, for all I can tell. And Nanette shall have milk, and eggs, and butter, since bacon will not do, and candles, by all means, for the sake of the grand relationship we all have in Father Adam."

She sent in her gifts at once, and that same evening, looking up to Nanette's window, she saw a light burning in it. The night was black and sultry; neither moon nor stars were out, but it did Dora good to see that light, and to know that the lonely old woman need not fret her poor heart away in the darkness. When she turned back from the window the smile on her face was so bright, that it puzzled Mrs. Courtenay.

"My dear, you look very happy," she said.

"Yes, I am happy," replied Dora; but she said nothing about Nanette and the candles. She would have told her mother, if Mrs. Courtenay could have kept a secret from Mrs. Luan, but that was impossible. And as it would have been cruel to make poor Mrs. Luan wretched by letting her know Dora's extravagance, her niece kept her own counsel.

"And you look happy, too, mamma," continued Dora, approaching the table, and look-

ing over her shoulder at the cards spread upon it. "I see you have been successful."

"So successful!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay; "all the cards came out. And as I luckily did it for a wish, I am quite sure you will get on with Monsieur Merand."

Dora laughed, and said there could be no doubt about it.

Having procured the requisite permission, Dora began her task the next day. The Musée was a quiet place—two or three old gentlemen, who had been painting there for the last twenty years, were her only companions. They looked as antique, and they were as silent as the pictures they copied; but for the bright sun shining in the place below, and the sound of carriages rolling on its stones, Dora might have fancied herself in some enchanted palace. She liked this tranquillity. She liked her task too; and as it progressed, and she felt that she was successful, she loved it. With a cheerful heart she left home in the morning; with a sense of happiness she went up the stone staircase and entered the rooms where her silent friends and companions, the pictures, were waiting for her. With a fatigue which was welcome, for it meant labor, success, and money, she put by her drawing when the day was over, and the keeper gave out the summons to depart. Happy are the women who have to toil for their bread in some loved vocation. The curse of labor is lightened for them, and sweetened into a blessing. Happy they before whom the fair fields of art lie open. Small though the harvest may be—not unto all are plenteous crops given—it is pure wheat, pure and good. Happy, therefore, was now Dora Courtenay. Monsieur Merand praised the first samples of her skill, and Dora's taste and judgment confirmed his approval. The results of her labor were satisfactory in every sense. Ere long she was in the receipt of an income varying from ten to fifteen pounds a month. Thanks to this un-

expected piece of good fortune, comfort under many shapes crept into their home. Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan had their promised silk dresses; now and then a carriage drew up at Madame Bertrand's door, and took her lodgers away for the day in the lovely environs of Rouen; and every evening the sounds of a piano stole out of Dora's window, and filled the dull old street with brilliant music. The change made her very happy. It was not merely the money, though that was welcome, it was also and especially the sense of leading a useful and active life, which charmed her. She had been poor, and she had been, if not rich, at least in easy circumstances, but never before this time had she earned money, never had she felt independent, and one in the great scheme of social life. It was a delightful feeling, and the more delightful that habit and time had not yet deadened its enjoyments and destroyed its freshness. And thus the happy summer stole away.

On a bright afternoon in September, Dora, on leaving the picture-gallery, went to the house of a poor gilder out of work, from whom she had ordered a frame a month back for a drawing she had undertaken on her own account. A series of misfortunes had prevented Dubois from keeping his promise. Dora had been patient and forbearing, and generous even, but now her patience was out, and she entered the dark lane at the end of which Dubois lived, prepared to bestow nothing upon him save a severe scolding. "I shall not be at all good-natured," she thought; "but very firm and dignified." As she came to this austere resolve, Dora reached the gilder's door, but when a dirty child admitted her within, and she once more saw the poverty-stricken aspect of the place, her heart relented.

There is a terrible resemblance between all poor homes. Place them in what latitude, under what sky you will, they are akin in

three essential characteristics—darkness, dirt, and dinginess; we do not speak of exceptions, but of the general rule. Some features, too, they have in common to a singular degree. Why, for instance, must the poor be everywhere so fond of poultry? The Dubois had three children, but they also found room for a white hen, which went scratching and cackling about their two rooms. Dora had often looked at that hen with a secret shudder, inspired by the thought that it might possibly be killed, taken to market, and there purchased by Mrs. Luan for home consumption. "It must be such a fowl as this that she brought home last week," thought Dora, now watching the wretched bird as it wandered under an old bedstead, and looked ghost-like in that gloomy refuge; "one should really know more about the creatures one eats, and what their rearing has been, for instance."

"Mademoiselle is looking at the white hen," said Madame Dubois, a dirty young woman. "Catch it, Joseph, and let Mademoiselle feel how fat it is getting."

In vain Mademoiselle protested. Joseph was already on his knees groping under the bedstead; but just as he stretched out his hand to seize her, the white hen artfully slipped under a chest of drawers.

"Shall I get a stick and poke her out?" asked Joseph, coming out from under the bed very red in the face, and much the worse for the dust he had found there. On hearing this suggestion, the white hen cackled a feeble protest, and Madame Dubois angrily promised Joseph the best slap he had ever had in his life if he made the attempt. Dora now expounded her errand. Madame Dubois clasped her hands and looked piteous.

They were the most unfortunate people. Poor Dubois had hurt his hand, his right hand, and was gone to the chemist's to get it dressed, That was their luck.

"Well, you are unlucky," kindly said Dora.

"But where is the frame? I want to see that it is of the right size."

Madame Dubois looked despondent. They were so unlucky that she had not liked to tell Mademoiselle, but just as the frame was ready to be gilt, Joseph and the hen had combined against it, and broken it that very morning. Dora nearly lost patience, but again pity prevailed, and with a few kind, comforting words, and a little donation, she left this abode of ill-luck. The sight of continued misfortune is oppressive, and Dora breathed a little sigh of relief as she got out again into the free and open air.

"I never knew such unlucky people," she thought. "It is simply dreadful; and if these were the days of witchcraft, I should say that the white hen was at the bottom of it. And who knows but she is? Who knows that sorcery has really gone by with the Middle Ages? What are all these grim old Gothic monuments which have remained, but stone legends? Why may not goblins and evil spirits abide in their walls, as they are said to live in waste places? Suppose one of the frightful stone chimeras that peep down at you from the water-spouts and buttresses, should take a fancy to be alive, and suiting itself to modern ideas and habits, should assume a more sober shape than it received from its Gothic carver? Suppose, too—"

Here Dora's fancies received a sudden check. She stood at Monsieur Merand's door, and as she had a drawing for him in her portfolio, she was recalled from the world in which stone becomes animate, to that in which drawings are exchanged for coined gold and silver. With a cheerful sense of labor, and reward, and usefulness upon her, Miss Courtenay entered the shop.

Monsieur Merand was not alone. That Doctor Richard, whom we have already seen there, was with him. He looked for his cane as if to go, but Monsieur Merand said eagerly,

"Not without taking that engraving, Doctor Richard—you must have it."

Dora was struck, and amused, too, at Doctor Richard's look. It was both shrewd and boyish—a school-boy look. Doctor Richard was past thirty, yet there was fun and mischief in his swarthy face, and in his dark eyes.

"I should not care to have that Doctor Richard attending on me if I were ill," thought Dora. "I am sure he laughs at all his patients. Has he patients?" she mentally added, seeing that his clothes, though scrupulously neat and clean, had seen some wear.

"Come, have it," urged Monsieur Merand.

"Not on those terms. Did I not tell you I was a ruined man?"

"Come, Doctor Richard, those mines did not take all your money."

"They plucked some good feathers from my wing, I can tell you."

"Mines! has he lost in mines?" thought Dora. "Not our mines, I hope." For the slender provision remaining to her mother and aunt was invested in tin-mines in the west of England.

Some more arguing ensued between the dealer and his customer, but the latter proving obdurate, Monsieur Merand put away the engraving, and Doctor Richard walked out of the shop without seeming to see Dora. She looked after him with a vague fear at her heart. How she would have questioned him concerning his losses if she had dared! Monsieur Merand saw her look, and he tapped his forehead.

"A good gentleman," he said, "a very good, humane gentleman—attends on half the poor in Rouen for nothing—but not right there, you know."

"He has had losses," remarked Dora.

"Yes, the news came this afternoon. I am sorry for him, poor fellow!"

Dora was untying the strings of her portfolio. Her hands shook a little.

"Pray where are those mines?" she asked, trying to speak carelessly.

Monsieur Merand thrust his hands in his pockets, raised his eyebrows, and shook his head. His answer was a doubtful one. The mines were in England, then in Wales, then in Cornwall. Dora, who had breathed a relieved sigh, felt faint and sick again.

"I hope—I trust they are not those of which my mother holds some shares," she said.

Some, alas! she might have said all that Mrs. Courtenay possessed was thus invested. The anxiety and distress on her countenance struck Monsieur Merand.

"Shall I ask Doctor Richard?" he said.

"Yes, Monsieur Merand, do, pray. It will oblige me. It is very foolish of me to think anything of the kind; but we have had losses already, and that makes me timorous."

"I shall be sure to see him this evening, or to-morrow at the latest," continued Monsieur Merand, "and then—why, here he is!" he added, breaking off as Doctor Richard re-entered the shop.

Something in their two faces showed Doctor Richard that they were talking of him. He bent his full black eyes on either alternately, and his countenance assumed a sudden look of mistrust, not unmingled with defiance. Monsieur Merand stood on ceremony with no one. In a few words he exposed Miss Courtenay's anxiety, and her purpose in inquiring. No kind and courteous periphrasis marked Doctor Richard's answer. He was a quick and sure surgeon, and did not prolong Dora's agony.

"The Redmore Mines," was his brief reply.

Dora turned pale; but uttered not one word at first. They both looked at her anxiously and gravely.

"These are the mines," she said, at length. After a while she added, looking at Doctor Richard, "Will there be nothing left?"

"Scarcely a sixpence in the pound, I believe; but no one can tell yet."

It was ruin. A second ruin, deeper, fuller than the first.

"God's will be done," said Dora, after another pause. "Here is your drawing, Monsieur Merand!"

She gave it to him as she spoke.

"I shall want another soon," he said, quickly.

She nodded assent, bowed to Doctor Richard, and left the shop without uttering another word. She could not speak, her heart was full, and her brain as yet felt too dizzy for thought.

There is a terrible kind of poverty; the poverty of the millions, who, being used to it from their birth, luckily do not see it in all its horrors; the poverty which the narrowest plank, which the frailest barrier divides from the deep, dark gulf of want. That poverty Dora had never known. She had been reared on a slender income; but she ever felt safe in her little cage, and had no conception of the life led by such as have to shift in the wilderness, and are not sure, when they go to bed at night, that there shall be bread for them on the morrow. To lose the nine-tenths of her income was nothing, whilst the tenth, which was strictly sufficient, remained unto her. But to lose that, to have to face a second poverty, grim and bare as the first, and far more pitiless than it had ever been, filled her with a sort of horror—not for her own sake merely, but for that of the beings whom she loved.

"My poor mother! My poor aunt!" she thought when she could think.

She was standing on the place, with the massive gloom of Notre Dame hanging over her. She entered the grand old church. She wanted to be calm ere she faced them at home; the dim light, the cool atmosphere, the faint breath of incense, the vastness, yet

the seclusion of this Christian home of souls, lulled the brief storm of her soul to rest. After all, she could work, she could earn; she was young, and had energy. She was thrown on Providence, and Providence was thereby bound to take care of her, and those who were dear to her. She was now like one of those birds of the air whose fleetness and freedom she had so often envied. There was nothing in store for her; like them she was to live in boundless trust, neither hoping nor despairing.

Dora's heart beat as she came to this conclusion. She was a brave girl, and now that the first shock was over, she could meet her new lot, and look it in the face. Besides, there was consolation in all its bitterness. Her eyes sought the gravestone with its *Requiescat*. It was too dark to read it; but she knew it was there, and her heart was full as she thought—

"Poor Paul! he is best at rest, after all! Best in Glasnevin, away from all these troubles, which would have bowed him down so heavily. He need fear no care, no burden now. Toil is over for him. He has got his wages. That is the meaning of the old Latin word *Requiescat*! May he rest! Is life such a trouble and a toil, that repose must needs be man's dearest wish to the dead? And now I must go in and tell them, poor things, and see tears, and hear lamentations."

She left the church and went home, and never, if the truth must be confessed, never had she felt so arrant a coward as when she went up the staircase. She heard them talking within. Mrs. Courtenay's tones had their usual airy cheerfulness, and even Mrs. Luan's husky voice told Dora, by its briskness, that her aunt was in a good humor.

"I dare say they have had a letter from John," thought Dora, with a sigh; and, feeling like a culprit, she entered the room. She did not delay one second—she could not.

"I have had such strange news," she said, looking at them wistfully; "not good news, I confess, but I hope you will take it well, and remember that I am young and can work, and that Monsieur Merand means to go on employing me."

"News!—what news?" asked Mrs. Courtenay, amazed.

"Our shares in the Redmore Mines are worthless," answered Dora, in a low voice; and she gave them the few particulars of the catastrophe which she knew.

Dora had been prepared for her mother's grief and her aunt's consternation, but she had not expected to find them both incredulous. Yet so they were. Mrs. Luan said, with some excitement:

"It is not true—the mines are good!" And she took up and put down her patchwork in evident emotion.

Mrs. Courtenay was still more positive.

"My dear," she said, good-humoredly, "if this were true, we should know it, as well as that Doctor Dick—"

"Doctor Richard," interrupted Dora.

"Doctor Richard," placidly resumed Mrs. Courtenay, "can scarcely have means of information denied to us. Besides, I dare say he was entertaining himself at your expense, child."

Dora looked very earnestly at her mother.

"If you had seen him and heard him speak, mamma," she said, "you could scarcely connect the idea of a foolish jest with that man; still less would you think it likely that he should or could be mistaken about a thing he asserts so positively as this."

Mrs. Courtenay looked slightly disturbed.

"Why, what is he like?" she asked.

"A gentleman—a real gentleman, I mean. Yes, truly, a real gentleman; though almost shabbily dressed."

"I don't believe him—he is a liar!" excitedly said Mrs. Luan.

"He looks one straight in the face, aunt."

"But, my dear, you know nothing about him," urged her mother.

"I have seen him, mamma, and both his appearance and manner are remarkable."

"Is he handsome?"

"Not at all. Indeed, he is dark and rather plain. I feel pretty sure that he comes from the south."

"Then he is an Irishman!"

"Yes—at least I think so."

"I don't believe it," again put in Mrs. Luan; "Richard is not an Irish name—he is a liar!"

But Dora noticed that her hand shook so that she could not thread her needle.

"I am not sure he is Irish," she resumed, "but his countenance makes me think he is. Whatever his country may be, his face is that of a generous, warm-hearted man, and, I will add, of an upright one."

Mrs. Courtenay said innocently:

"My dear, how you must have looked at him to see all that in his face!"

"I did indeed look at him," replied Dora, gravely. "When he uttered this terrible news, I looked at him as I seldom look at people, mamma. But you see it was Destiny, our Fate, that was speaking. He seemed sorry, very sorry for me, but he softened and mitigated nothing. I do not think he could do so even if he wished it—the truth is too strong for him."

They both looked at her with some surprise. She was pale, but grave and collected. The blow had fallen on her, but it had not crushed her; and though she felt it still, she was already rallying from its effects. They exchanged alarmed looks. Was it, could it be true?

"But if the money is lost, what shall we do?" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, raising her voice, and clasping her hands in terror.

"Monsieur Merand asks me for another

drawing," said Dora; "besides, I shall try and get some teaching."

"I shall write to Mr. Derring at once!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, much agitated. "As my solicitor, he must know the truth."

"It is too late for the post to-day, mamma. I dare say we shall know the truth to-morrow."

But it was very plain that concerning that truth Dora herself felt no doubt. The dreary certainty had entered her soul in Monsieur Merand's shop, and could leave it no more.

They spent a melancholy evening. Mrs. Courtenay took out her cards, and tried the favorite patience of His Majesty Louis Dix-huit, but she changed color ere she had gone half through it. She had placed an omen upon it, and whether the cards would not come right, or whether—what was just as likely—Mrs. Courtenay's disturbed mind would not let her take advantage of the chances of the game, it was plain that the result would have been a cruel "no" to her secret hopes. So she would not trust fate, but mixed up the cards hurriedly, and put them away with a frightened look that went to Dora's heart. It was a relief to her when she retired to her room for the night. As she closed her window, which had remained open, she looked up to Nanette's, where a light was burning.

"My poor little fairy," she thought, "that light of yours has often cheered me, and done me good, for poor though I am, it showed me I was not powerless. And now, must I bid you be careful and sparing of your poor rush-light, or, saddest of all, give up my little bounty because I can afford it no longer!"

These were not cheerful thoughts, and Dora felt depressed as she sat on the edge of her bed, and looked at the story of the patient Griseldis on the faded curtains.

"She worked for her living, to be sure," thought Dora, as she examined the prim figure standing with its spindle and distaff by the

cottage door, "but did she ever know the cruel doubt and fear which are upon me now? She had always wool to spin, I suppose, that patient Griselidis. Was there a time when she thought of sitting empty-handed, with nothing to do, and therefore nothing to earn? God help us! If those shares are really lost, are we three to be dependent on my drawings, and on Monsieur Merand? John will do something for his mother, poor fellow!—but what can he do? Oh! how weak and ungrateful I was all this time, complaining that I led a dull life, forsooth, and not appreciating the inestimable blessing of security and independence, mean and humble though both were! I fear no labor, no drudgery; but what if these should fail me, and with them honest livelihood! If I had been sinking at sea, or shut in by flames from all help, that Doctor Richard could scarcely have looked more compassionate than he did. He seemed struck with pity. I dare say my face told him it was ruin! ruin!—cruel ruin!—irrevocable ruin! God help me! what shall we do?"

Once more a sort of despair filled her heart, but it soon passed away. Hope and a naturally brave spirit chased the cowardly feeling, and bade it begone.

"I will be brave—I will be strong!" thought Dora, proudly, "and, with God's help, we shall have the needful."

She went to bed and slept—slept soundly, even. But Mrs. Courtenay's slumbers were agitated and broken, and Mrs. Luan's eyes did not close once through the whole of that long night.

CHAPTER XII.

THE two elder ladies were anxiously waiting for post-time. Dora was calm. She needed no confirmation to her knowledge of the worst. "We must bear it," she thought, re-

ducing into practice the lessons of Epictetus. "The rest matters little."

That "rest," which she thus dismissed, was much to the two elder women. They denied its existence, yet waited for its coming with fear and trembling. What if those Redmore Mines should indeed prove as treacherous as Dora's four hundred a year! We all know that sorrows come not singly. These dark sisters are in a league against man, and when one has done with him, she calls another to fill her vacant place by the stricken hearth. Well may people in trouble be gloomy. They know that, though one misfortune is gone, the other is surely coming. But it is hard to feel a butt for Fate, so against that knowledge Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan both rebelled.

"I am sure the postman has gone by," triumphantly said Mrs. Courtenay.

She had been looking out of the window for the postman during the last hour. She now looked again, and to her dismay saw him turning the corner of the street. At once she drew in her frightened face, and sat down, pale and expectant. Mrs. Luan looked scared, and turned rather yellow. Dora put down her sewing, and waited patiently. A ring was heard at the door below.

"It is the baker," murmured Mrs. Courtenay.

A step came up the stairs—a discreet tap at their door followed.

"Come in," faintly said Mrs. Courtenay.

The door opened, and Madame Bertrand entered the room, with a blue foolscap letter, an English letter, in her hand. She came in smiling and nodding. English letters were always welcome to her lodgers.

"Here it is," she said, still nodding. "'How pleased the ladies will be,' I said to the postman; 'they have not had one for such a time.' 'Well, then,' he replied, 'they will not mind paying the extra postage; it is written on thick paper, and overweight, you see.' So I

paid him the twenty-four sous," continued Madame Bertrand.

Dora put her hand in her pocket, paid the money, and took the letter. Madame Bertrand withdrew, unconscious of the desolation she had left behind her.

"Read it, Dora—I cannot," said poor Mrs. Courtenay.

Dora obeyed and read. They heard her in death-like silence. Their little all was gone, their little hoard had been swallowed in the great wreck; they were left, two white-haired helpless women, dependent on a girl. Dora's tears flowed at the sight of their silent grief.

"Dear mamma, dear aunt," she said, looking from one to the other, "I am young, and I can work. It is Providence that sent me to Monsieur Merand's shop. And I like drawing—I did it for pleasure as much as for money; if he will but continue and take my sketches, we can live on my earnings. Besides, can I not teach English or music, or do a hundred things? As to that, can I not sew?"

But age has not the elasticity of youth. Ruin was before Mrs. Courtenay and her sister-in-law, and they could see nothing else. Dora's voice fell on their ear without a note of hope or comfort in it. It sounded idle, far away and dull, and left the bitter truth in all its bitterness. In vain she tried to console them—she failed, and each rejected her well-meant efforts after her own fashion. Mrs. Luan by a silent, moody motion of her hand, and heavy, averted looks; Mrs. Courtenay by pitiful lamentations, ending in sobs and tears.

There is something very grievous in the despair of age. Childhood and youth have their passionate griefs, but we know that the Siren Hope keeps many a sweet lure in store for either. The old she deserts without pity; let them suffer, their troubles at the best will be brief, and there is a cure for all sorrows beneath the green sod. Rest is there, and

silence, and with both a balm to every earthly grief; is it worth while for that bright, fair-haired Hope to take thought of them? To Dora she was prodigal of promises in this sad hour. A national gallery would scarcely have held all the drawings she held up to her view. Bags full of silver five-franc pieces, rouleaux of gold, blue bank-notes, this gay young goddess held in either of her white hands. Dora's courage was but the fast belief in future good rising out of this present woe. Of work and money she felt sure; but she vainly tried to impart her certainty to her mother.

"No, no," despondently said Mrs. Courtenay; "I dare say Monsieur Merand will be like the Redmore Mines, and we shall all starve!—all starve!" she added, rocking herself to and fro in her chair.

Dora thought at first that as her mother's grief was loud, it would be soon over—sooner, perhaps, than that of Mrs. Luan, who sat silent and moody, like a yellow statue of despair; but it was not so. Mrs. Luan rallied a little, and grew less torpid as the day passed; whilst Mrs. Courtenay became more and more excitable. She had borne, with great resignation, with a sort of cheerfulness, indeed, the loss of Dora's four hundred a year, but nothing a year threw her into a sort of distraction over which Dora found that she was powerless. Mrs. Courtenay cried the whole day, refused to eat, and when she at length went to bed, it was not to sleep, but to fret and moan. Dora became uneasy, and that uneasiness rose to alarm when, on entering her mother's room to see if she was sleeping, she found Mrs. Courtenay sitting up in her bed, talking aloud and at random.

It had not seemed to Dora before this that grief in one of her mother's excitable temperament might be dangerous. But now the conviction that it could be so rushed to her mind with terrible force, and conquered her equanimity.

"Aunt!" she cried, going back to Mrs. Luan in their little sitting-room, "stay with mamma; I must go for a doctor."

She hastily put on her bonnet and ran downstairs to Madame Bertrand. She found her in her chair snoring comfortably, whilst the gray Angola cat, gathered up in a demure attitude on the table by her mistress, was purring in unison. The lamp burned unused, for though Madame Bertrand's spectacles were on her nose, and a half-mended stocking was on her left hand, the good lady was, as we said, fast asleep. It was but a little Dutch picture of domestic comfort; yet that homely woman in the homely room, with the brown old furniture and the ancient clock ticking behind the door, gave Dora a brief, sharp pang. Oh! to be so once more, with health and humble comfort, and the sweetest of human blessings, a blessing, indeed, which is more of Heaven than of earth—dear, happy peace!

Madame Bertrand was not very fast asleep—only dozing, as she said when on awakening she saw Dora standing before her; and she good-humoredly asked to know her young lodger's pleasure.

"My mother is ill," replied Dora, "and I want a doctor."

Madame Bertrand stared.

"Ill!" she exclaimed, amazed. "Then we must have the English doctor—Dr. Richard."

Dora could not help giving a little start. She did not want Doctor Richard; she herself could not have said why.

"Is he a good doctor?" she asked doubtfully—"a very good one, I mean?"

"Good!" screamed Madame Bertrand; "why, did he not save Madame Bernard's child that was black in the face! And when poor Monsieur Legrand had that brain fever, did he not get him through—only is he within now? He would be the greatest doctor in Rouen if he were not always nobody knows where."

"Then let us go for some one else," hurriedly said Dora; "I must lose no time."

"I shall go with you to Doctor Richard's," Madame Bertrand good-naturedly proposed; "and if he is not within, we can only go to Doctor Merson—but I have no great faith in *him*," she added, with an ominous shake of the head.

They went out together. The night was fine, but cool. The chill air did Dora good, and helped to calm her.

"I dare say it is only a little natural excitement," she thought, already rallying from her fears; "still, I shall be glad to have advice. I hope that Doctor Richard is a good doctor?"

And she asked if he lived far away.

"This is the house," answered Madame Bertrand, stopping before a low and very old mansion. Dora knew that house well. It stood next to that in which Nanette lived. She passed it daily on her way to the Musée. She knew that gray façade, that low arched door, those grated windows on the ground-floor. Once she had seen the door open, and caught a glimpse of a green court with mildewed walls, an old shattered fountain, and a heap of sculptured rubbish; but Doctor Richard, or indeed any one, she had never seen about the place.

"He is within," said Madame Bertrand; she looked up at the first-floor windows as she spoke—they were curtainless. Dora saw a light passing from room to room, but she could not see who carried it.

"Does Doctor Richard live here?" she inquired, as her companion rang the bell, which gave a loud dismal peal in the empty rooms within.

"Not always; but, poor gentleman! he spends all his money in buying old things, and he stows them away here, you see."

The light vanished from the windows above, a step was heard coming down the staircase, and presently the door opened, and Dora saw

Doctor Richard with his hat on and a light in his hand. She saw him, but he did not see her. He only saw Madame Bertrand, behind whom she stood, in the darkness of the street.

"Well!" he said, with good-humored asperity. "Who is ill? Who is dying now, just to vex me and keep me in Rouen to-night?"

"No one is dying, I hope, Monsieur Richard," replied Madame Bertrand, curtsying; "but Mademoiselle's mamma is very poorly, so we came for you."

Doctor Richard moved his light till it fell on Dora's face; his look showed that he recognized her, but he betrayed no other token of previous acquaintance. He extinguished the candle, put it away on the last step of the staircase, then walked out, locking the door behind him. It was plain he lived alone in that dreary old mansion.

"How strange and sharp he looks," thought Dora, to whom that night aspect of Doctor Richard's dark face gave a very different impression from that which she had received in Monsieur Merand's shop! "I hope he is a good doctor. I fear he is a wilful one."

At first Doctor Richard walked up the street before them. Then suddenly slackening his pace, he stayed by Dora's side, and began questioning her. How long had her mother been ill, and what were the symptoms?

"She got bad news this morning," replied Dora; "news which agitated her, and she is slightly delirious now. It is this that frightens me."

"There is probably no cause for alarm," he composedly replied, "though there may be some for care."

He spoke no more, and when they reached the house he followed her up-stairs to her mother's room, without uttering a word.

"Mamma, I have brought Doctor Richard to see you," said Dora, going up to her mother.

"My dear, we cannot afford doctors now,"

answered Mrs. Courtenay, excitedly. "They are expensive, you know. Besides, that is not Doctor Richard."

"Yes, it is!" he good-humoredly replied in English, and at the same time sitting down by her, and taking her hand to feel her pulse, "I am not merely Doctor Richard, but your close neighbor, don't you know that?"

The sick lady gave him a puzzled look, and then, with a wearied sigh, she let her upraised head sink back on her pillow. Doctor Richard looked at her very attentively; he leaned back in his chair at the foot of the bed, and scanned her features with the closest scrutiny, seeming in no hurry either to speak or to move. Mrs. Luan stared at him amazed, whilst Dora watched him with breathless suspense. At length he rose and looked for his hat.

"Is there nothing to be done, sir?" asked Dora.

"Not yet," he replied, "but you may as well sit up with her. I shall call again in an hour or so, and then I shall know better how to act."

Dora followed him out of the room.

"There is no cause for alarm, sir, is there?" she asked, detaining him at the head of the staircase.

"Not that I know of; but, to tell you the truth, I do not know what is the matter with this lady, and I do not wish to prescribe until I have such knowledge. I shall call round in an hour or so."

"But my mother cannot be very ill!" urged Dora. "She was so well this morning."

"I do not think she is very ill," he answered, quietly; "but it is to feel sure of it that I shall come again."

He left her, and Dora, much relieved, returned to her mother's room. But the relief was only momentary. As she sat and listened to Mrs. Courtenay's gentle wanderings, and looked at her flushed face, a subtle but sickening fear crept to her heart. What if the blow

had been too severe? What if the terror of poverty had irremediably shaken a mind of no great strength? For it was a cruel—a very cruel blow. She need only look at Mrs. Luan's dull, heavy face, at her vacant eyes, and hands idly clasped on her lap, and see how that blow had told on her. She tried to rouse her a little.

"Do not look so, aunt," she said, going to her chair and bending over it, "take your patchwork and cheer up. Mamma will get well, and John will help us, and I shall draw for Mons. Merand, and all will be right again."

"We shall give a party next week," here said Mrs. Courtenay, "and your aunt shall wear a yellow dress, Dora."

Mrs. Luan smiled grimly.

"She thinks me foolish!" she said, "does she? Eh?"

She was evidently triumphing in her superior wisdom. Dora's eyes grew dim as she looked toward the bed.

"Some people look wise and are silly," continued Mrs. Luan, with a nod. "Oh! dear, how hot my head is!"

She took off her cap as she spoke, and flung it to the other end of the room.

There was no comfort to receive there, no comfort, either, to administer. Dora returned to her mother's bedside.

"It is a party, a beautiful party," resumed Mrs. Courtenay: "only where is Paul? You must dance with Paul, Dora. Pity you are brother and sister—I should have liked you to marry Paul. So accomplished—such a gentleman!"

"Do listen to her!" scornfully said Mrs. Luan, still seeming to triumph in her superiority. Then she gave a start, and added abruptly, "That's the death-watch!"

Dora felt almost angry.

"That is Madame Bertrand's great clock ticking," she replied, warmly. "I wonder at you, aunt!"

Mrs. Luan stared at her without replying. Then she rose, picked up her cap, put it on, after shaking it, and, to Dora's relief, went to her own room. She remained alone with her mother, looking at her, listening to her in troubled silence. The evening, the house, the street, all seemed preternaturally still, but Madame Bertrand's clock was awfully distinct.

"How cruel of aunt to say that!" thought Dora; "but, poor thing, she knows no better. Why do I listen to that foolish old clock? It is a hundred years old, at least, and is in its dotage—why, then, do I mind it?"

Why is superstition, latent in the human heart, ready to start forth at the first call of sorrow? Oh! what a relief it was when a ring was heard below, when the street-door opened, and Doctor Richard's step came up the staircase! A relief, yet Dora's heart beat so with sudden fear, that she could scarcely rise to receive him when he entered the room. Without speaking he went and took the chair she had left vacant. He sat down again, and he looked at Mrs. Courtenay with the closest attention. Dora stood at the head of the bed, looking at him with an intent gaze. Years afterward she could have drawn his face from memory as she saw it on this evening, so keen, so watchful was the look she bent upon him then. Doctor Richard was not very young, and he was not at all handsome. He was still in the prime and strength of life, but he was plain and dark. He had a broad, massive forehead, strongly-marked eyebrows, and fine but very piercing eyes. Some sternness there was in the upper portion of his face, but a handsome, genial mouth redeemed it from anything like coldness. With all this his was a perplexing countenance, perhaps, because it was one of many contrasts, and, therefore, not easily read. Intellect it expressed and power tempered by good-humor; but with these attractive gifts there were others which qualified them. Doctor Richard looked like a man of

strong passions, and especially like one with whom anger is both quick and vehement. He might be, and probably he was, warm-hearted, but he was certainly very warm-tempered.

Dora looked, not to observe all this, though many a time later she remembered and construed every one of these signs, but to read in that dark, expressive face the fate of her sick mother. Doctor Richard remained long silent. When he spoke at length, it was to say, "I am just as much puzzled as before."

He spoke with a candor rare in medical men. They cannot afford it. Their patients expect them to be endowed with Godlike infallibility, and woe be to them if by word or look they disappoint the preposterous expectation! But Doctor Richard did not seem to care much for the reputation of his professional skill. For without giving Dora time to reply, he continued, "I cannot tell yet. Will you let me sit an hour here and wait?"

"Certainly; but it is robbing you of a night's sleep, sir."

"Not it. I can read, you know."

He took a book out of his pocket as he spoke, and was soon intent upon its contents. The door of the inner room opened ere long, and Mrs. Luan came forth; but Doctor Richard only turned a page without looking round. Mrs. Luan sat down not far from him, and still Doctor Richard was, or seemed to be, unconscious of her presence. Thus all three sat in painful silence, whilst Mrs. Courtenay uttered some flighty remark every now and then.

"Dora," she once exclaimed, eagerly, "is everything safe?"

"Yes, mamma, quite safe."

"I mean the money. Because, you see, Mr. Brown is in the room."

She looked significantly at Doctor Richard, who raised his eyes, gave a little start of surprise, and even colored slightly. Dora blushed and explained hastily:

"Mr. Brown was our banker, and we unfortunately lost some money through him," she said; "so—"

"Mrs. Courtenay connects me with him," said Doctor Richard, without letting her go on; "pray do not apologize."

"Mr. Brown was a rogue!" remarked Mrs. Luan, staring at Doctor Richard, who returned the look with interest.

Dora, much perplexed and confused, said nothing. Doctor Richard preserved the greatest composure, and resumed his reading. A book lay on the table—Dora took it up. It was "Epictetus." Never, alas! had her mind felt less inclined to receive the stoic's teaching than it felt then. How hard, how cold, how heartless it all seemed! She compelled herself to read, indeed, but half the time she found no meaning in the words before her. Ever and anon her eyes wandered from the page to Doctor Richard, and every time they did so, they found, on their way, the face of Mrs. Luan, sitting in the gloomy part of the room, and staring at the stranger with that fixed stare which one sometimes sees in animals when a guest toward whom they feel but half friendly is present. That look, of which Doctor Richard was, or chose to seem, unconscious, added to Dora's nervousness. She could read no more—her anxiety was too great; and still time passed, and still Doctor Richard read on, and showed no inclination to go.

Suddenly a church clock struck the hour—two of the morning; then a few minutes later another clock took up the tale, and another again—for a whole quarter of an hour it was two. Dora sat no longer reading, but, with her cheek resting on the palm of her hand, and her elbow on the table. "Will he never go?—will he never speak?" she thought; and she looked toward him almost entreatingly.

This time Doctor Richard saw her. He had half closed his book on his knee, and bending a little forward, he was looking at her keenly

and intently. If she had been a picture or a statue, his gaze could not have been a more fixed one than it was.

"How is she?—What is it?" whispered Dora, rising, and going up to him, for such a look, she thought, could have but one meaning.

Mrs. Courtenay had fallen into a gentle sleep. Dora's expressive eyes asked: "Is this good?" And Doctor Richard nodded and smiled, put his book in his pocket, and rose to go. He was silent, and Dora, taking the hint, let him out without speaking.

"Well, sir?" she said eagerly, as soon as the door was closed upon them, and they stood on the landing.

"Well," he replied, "I know all about it now, and Mrs. Courtenay sleeps without an opiate, which I did not dare to give her. I believe she will be well in a few days; but if, as I fear, mental uneasiness be at the root of her disease, pray do all you can to compose her."

Poor Dora! this threw her back on her almost forgotten trouble. Doctor Richard saw her eyes grow dim, and her lips quiver. But he could do or say nothing, and he merely bade her a good-night.

"Good-night, sir," said Dora, following him down; "I thank you much, very much—will you come again?"

He seemed surprised at the suggestion.

"Of course I shall," he said—"there, do not come down any further—I can let myself out; the night air is keen."

But Dora would follow him to the street door, and even hold the light for him down the street. He walked away a few steps, then came back.

"You need not sit up with Mrs. Courtenay," he said. "I feel quite sure of her now. Good-night."

He held out his hand. Dora gave him hers, and thanked him again. He pressed her hand,

and that with so cordial, so friendly a grasp, that as he walked away and Dora closed the door upon him, she thought, with some emotion, "I am sure Doctor Richard is a friend." And so he was—a fast, true friend to her. Such a friend as life grants to few.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Dora softly entered her mother's room the next morning, she found Mrs. Courtenay still sleeping. Her head lay on her pillow, her hands were clasped, and in the subdued light, which stole in horizontal rays through the closed shutters, she looked so calm, so peaceful, that Dora's last apprehensions vanished as by enchantment. Her face was radiant when she went forth into the little sitting-room, and there found Madame Bertrand, who brought the intimation that Monsieur Merand was below.

"Ask him to come up," whispered Dora, "but tell him my mother has been ill and that we must speak low."

Presently Monsieur Merand came up on tip-toe, and with many whispered apologies for troubling mademoiselle, he told his errand.

In her distress at the unexpected catastrophe of the Redmore Mines, Dora had left her portfolio behind her. This Monsieur Merand now brought back, but not without having, as he confessed, first inspected its contents. His own drawing he had found, also Dora's copy of Keyser's music-lesson, and concerning this he now ventured to speak. With an air of diffident yet injured candor, he asked to know if Dora had been working for any other dealer. Her freedom to do so Monsieur Merand never questioned, but then he could assure her that she would find him as liberal as any other member of the trade.

"Now, with regard to that drawing of Keyser's," he added, in his most insinuating

tone, "I should like it much if it were not secured."

"It is not," honestly replied Dora, and in the fulness of her heart she was going to add that Monsieur Merand was welcome to it, when the door opened and Doctor Richard entered the room. Dora forgot the dealer and the drawing in a moment.

"Mamma is sleeping," she said, eagerly—"is that a good sign, Doctor Richard?"

"A very good sign," he answered, smiling.

"I believe, however, she will soon waken."

"Then I shall wait till she does."

He took a chair, and put down his hat. He evidently did not think that Dora's business with Monsieur Merand could be of a private nature. The portfolio lay open on the table, the drawing was displayed to Doctor Richard's view, and he unceremoniously bent forward to see it better.

"What a fine drawing!" he exclaimed—"is that yours, Miss Courtenay?"

"It is," she replied, blushing a little, "and Monsieur Merand wants to purchase it from me."

But either Doctor Richard's entrance, or his praise of Dora's performance, had changed Monsieur Merand's mood, for he looked superciliously at the drawing, put forth his nether lip, and said, curtly:

"Yes, I want a drawing that size; but this is not one of your best efforts, mademoiselle?"

Dora changed color. Was Monsieur Merand going to turn critical in the hour when she most needed his admiration?

"Nonsense, Monsieur Merand!" put in Doctor Richard—"that is a first-rate drawing."

"Not in my opinion," dryly said Monsieur Merand, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and looking rather defiantly at his customer.

"I cannot do better," said Dora, with a wistful look.

Monsieur Merand looked at the drawing

again, and grumbled something about being in a hurry, and not being able to help himself. Dora felt mortified, but necessity is a hard mistress, and this was not the time to revolt against Monsieur Merand's criticism, however harsh and unpleasant it might be.

"And what do you expect for this?" he asked, after a while.

Dora hesitated.

"Say two hundred francs," suggested Monsieur Merand, cavalierly.

Before Dora could answer, Doctor Richard interfered.

"I suppose you mean four hundred," he said, very coolly.

"Doctor Richard," hotly answered Monsieur Merand, "do I meddle in your business?—do I go and prescribe for your patients?"

"My dear sir, would my patients follow your prescriptions?" was the amused reply.

"Well, then, I decline to submit to your interference, Doctor Richard! I will give mademoiselle two hundred francs—that and no more."

"And I will engage, by sending that drawing to a house I know in London, to get her, if not four hundred francs for it, at least three hundred and fifty."

Doctor Richard spoke confidently; Monsieur Merand looked blank.

"I cannot help myself," he said at length, and speaking very sullenly. "I will give mademoiselle the three hundred and fifty francs. I do not gain a franc by the transaction—not one," he added, with an injured look.

Doctor Richard chuckled, and seemed excessively amused.

"I declare it is better than a play to hear you!" he said, good-humoredly. "Only to think of your wanting to pass off these tricks upon me, Monsieur Merand!"

Monsieur Merand looked as if he did not know whether to be entertained or angry at

the cool tone in which his customer addressed him. He took the wisest course, however, and, not deigning to answer him, he turned to Dora, to whom he said, very civilly—"When may I have the drawing, mademoiselle?"

"I should like to give it a few last touches; and if my mother is so far well that I can leave her, I shall work at it to-day, Monsieur Merand."

"Then I hope she will be well," he said, a little crossly. "Good-morning;" and with the look of a conquered man, he left the room.

Dora turned toward Doctor Richard. Her beaming face expressed her thanks before they were spoken. He gave her no time to utter a word.

"Do not," he said, quickly. "You would not have had me stand by and see you robbed? Why, your drawing is worth more than the sum I have stated."

"I cannot understand it," replied Dora, looking perplexed; "I never knew I was so clever; but however that may be, I do cordially thank you. Money is invaluable to me just now, Doctor Richard."

He nodded gravely, as much as to say, "Ah! yes, I know—the Redmore Mines;" and as he heard Mrs. Courtenay talking to Mrs. Luan within, he asked if he could not see her. Dora went in before him, then came back and signed him to follow her.

Mrs. Courtenay was sitting up in her bed. She looked calm and collected; and, indeed, was so far recovered, that Doctor Richard's presence startled and surprised her. At once she looked to her daughter for explanation.

"You have been quite unwell, mamma," said Dora, smiling, "and Doctor Richard, who is our neighbor, called in to see you. And what do you think mamma, Monsieur Merand came a quarter of an hour ago to ask me for a drawing from one of the pictures in the Gal-

lery. And he is in a desperate hurry for it. So do make haste and get well."

"And the Redmore Mines," said Mrs. Courtenay, plaintively; "I did not dream that, did I, Dora?"

"No, indeed, you did not. But the Redmore Mines are here now," she added, gayly, showing her little right hand. "You must know, mamma, that I am quite clever. Doctor Richard has been looking at my last drawing whilst you slept, and he thinks that Monsieur Merand scarcely pays me enough. He advises me to raise my terms, and," continued Dora, suddenly dropping the present for the past tense, "I have done it; for he spoke opposite Monsieur Merand himself, who could not deny it, and gave me nearly a hundred per cent. more at once. So what do you think of all that?"

Mrs. Courtenay, scarcely able to think at all, looked both confused and happy. She also looked grateful, and her mild blue eyes were raised to Doctor Richard's face, with an expression he could not mistake. He smiled kindly, and sitting down by her bedside, entered into conversation with her. He attacked the Redmore Mines at once, and put the matter in a cheerful and airy point of view, which happened to be particularly suited to Mrs. Courtenay's turn of mind.

"Such catastrophes," said Doctor Richard, "are like the railway accidents and steamboat collisions, the only variety of modern life. The ups and downs formerly were of another nature. Beautiful ladies were not safe for a moment, especially when they were wealthy, but were the lawful prey of the king, his favorites, and his powerful subjects. As to men, the strong hand was the right sort of hand then. Themis had not merely her eyes bandaged, but fast closed in sleep. Every man had to be his own policeman, and, as a natural consequence, his own judge and jury. This variety of occupations must, to say the

least of it, have made a gentleman irritable, and accounts for many little peculiarities of those days which would otherwise be inexplicable to our modern ideas. And now, you see, all that is done, for lovers do not kidnap heiresses, but companies wheedle them out of their gold. Robin Hood or Claude Duval neither put bishops to ransom, nor dance minuets with fine ladies on the highway; but for all that, money flies out of our pockets by a magical process called high interest. Sad, very sad, Mrs. Courtenay, only, you know, we are not born with pockets."

"Dear me, to be sure not!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, much struck with the fact, which had never occurred to her before; "that is a very original remark, Doctor Richard."

"It is none of mine," he answered, smiling; "but it is full of philosophy. So let us bear with this catastrophe, which we cannot mend, and let us bless our stars that it is not the destruction of life or limb, as it might be if it occurred through a railway or a steamer. Loss of money is, after all, the least of the three modern evils."

"I think so," said Mrs. Courtenay, brightening. "I have always had a horror of being drowned or disfigured, and I would much rather lose my shares of the Redmore Mines than even my left eye."

She looked quite gay and cheerful again, and in this mood Doctor Richard left her, promising to call again in the evening.

Mrs. Courtenay was charmed with her medical attendant. "How kind he seems!" she said.

"Seems!" repeated Dora, with emotion; "is, mamma. •Twice he came to you yesterday evening, and he sat up here till past two rather than prescribe an opiate, which, it seems, might have injured you. And think how kind it was of him to interfere with Monsieur Merand on my behalf. Monsieur Merand looked so angry! I am sorry to lose my

good opinion of him, but I am afraid he has almost cheated me. How kind, though, of Doctor Richard not to mind exposing him!"

"Yes, very kind," murmured Mrs. Courtenay. "And when are you to get the money, Dora?"

"To-day, if I can finish my drawing," eagerly replied her daughter. "Indeed, I had better go at once," she added, rising; "Monsieur Merand is in a hurry for it, and I am in a hurry for Monsieur Merand's five-franc pieces."

"Yes, I wish you had the money," rather querulously said Mrs. Courtenay.

Dora saw she could trust her mother to Mrs. Luan's care, and that it would be better for her to go and calm the poor lady's mind by the prospect of gain, the only prospect which then seemed to have any charm in it for Mrs. Courtenay. So with a cheerfulness half real, half put on—alas! how many things are so put on by brave hearts, heroism, patience, and the rest—Dora took her portfolio and went forth. On her way she thought, "Since I am selling the drawing, I no longer want the frame; and since it is not ready, had I not better go and tell that poor Dubois not to make it? Poor fellow! I hope he will not be too much disappointed!"

Dora found the door of the Dubois ajar, and she pushed it open hesitatingly; but she was not prepared for the sight that met her view. Her frame, bright as gilding could make it, stood before her, held by Monsieur Dubois, whose hand had got miraculously well during the night, and no less a person than Doctor Richard stood with his back to her. He turned round, and seemed surprised to see her, whilst consternation appeared on Madame Dubois's face, and Monsieur Dubois turned pale as a ghost.

"Doctor Richard," said Dora, reddening, "was that man's hand unwell?"

"Unwell! no. Has he been imposing on

you, Miss Courtenay? I suppose he was out of work—a child ill, eh?”

“Yes,” replied Dora, “that is it. Was it not true?”

Doctor Richard laughed heartily, and seemed much amused.

“The old story!” he said. “My dear young lady,” he added, “why did you not look at the man’s low, mean face, and read him? His story is this. I have kept him in work for the last six weeks, and during that time neither he, nor his wife, nor his children, nor even the white hen, has had a moment’s ailment!”

Dora was mortified. She had been cheated and deceived, and Doctor Richard only laughed at her simplicity.

“He is a low vagabond,” resumed Doctor Richard, still speaking English, but shaking his forefinger good-humoredly at the culprit, who looked extremely uneasy, “but clever, Miss Courtenay, a self-taught genius; and though it is abominable that he should thus impose upon you, I cannot afford to be angry with him. Look at that frame I have just bought. There is fancy and invention for you! Look at that foliage!”

“Excuse me, Doctor Richard,” said Dora, gently touching his arm, and looking both amused and puzzled, “but this frame was made for me.”

“Have they sold you my frame?”

“Dr. Richard, I ordered it.”

“So did I, Miss Courtenay.”

They exchanged looks—then Doctor Richard burst out laughing.

“The vagabond!—the low vagabond!” he said again. “He wanted, perhaps, to sell the same frame twice over. Now, Miss Courtenay, take my advice, do not let yourself be so easily imposed upon. But what a pity the rascal should be so clever! Look at that design, how correct and how graceful, and those I have at home are better still. I must for-

give him, Miss Courtenay, for the sake of that leaf!”

Dora blushed and laughed.

“But, Doctor Richard,” she stammered, “the design is not his—’tis mine, I drew it.”

“You drew it, Miss Courtenay!”

“Yes. I wanted it for my drawing, and I drew several designs, but he told me this was the best—and so—”

She did not proceed. Doctor Richard was an altered man. The veins in his forehead were thick and swollen, and his full brown eyes burned with resentment so blighting that it almost frightened her. The amusement with which he had heard Dora tell of the imposition practised upon her vanished when he thus learned the fraud attempted on himself.

“And so they were your drawings?” he cried at length, speaking angrily and fast, and evidently in a great rage. “Your drawings, which the rascal passed upon me for his; and I, a gull as I ever am, believed him!”

His look, as it fell on the convicted gilder, expressed the most vehement indignation. Evidently Doctor Richard found nothing humorous or entertaining in being made a dupe of.

“Is not this abhorrent and shameful?” he proceeded, addressing the gilder in French, which he spoke forcibly and well. “You might have spared yourself this disgrace, and been none the poorer. Nay, the truth should have brought you in more than that base lie.”

Monsieur Dubois murmured some unintelligible reply, but already Dr. Richard’s anger had melted into scorn. His brow grew smooth again, his brown eyes resumed their serenity, and he burst into a hearty laugh at his own expense.

“To think of my addressing that low-minded wretch as if he knew the beauty of truth!” he said, turning to Dora. “Whereas she never left her well, so far as he is concerned. But

how are we to deal with this rascal, Miss Courtenay? Who keeps the frame? I ordered it, but then you gave the design, so that if you want it—"

"I do not," replied Dora, coloring a little.

"Then I shall keep it," he said, readily. "I shall call again and settle with you, sir," he added, giving Monsieur Dubois a significant look; "for I can see in your face, Miss Courtenay," he continued, looking at her with a smile, as they both left the place, "that I must not be too hard on this guilty couple in your presence. You looked quite startled a while ago."

"You looked very angry, Doctor Richard."

"Did I? Well, Saint Augustine says that each man bears within himself Adam, Eve, and the serpent, and I confess I find it so. Often that weak Adam, and frail Eve, and tempting serpent are busy with me. So lest Adam should prevail against me, I now leave that sneaking impostor and his wife. I have no doubt they are quarrelling now, with the boy looking on, and the white hen cackling. Let them! Confess that you think me a fool!" he abruptly added, stepping on the staircase to look hard at Dora.

"You forget that I, too, was deceived," replied Dora, smiling.

"In matters of which you could have little or no knowledge. But if I had looked at the man's head, I might have known he could not be the author of that beautiful drawing. Yet it was that which blinded me. I saw it, and forgot the man. So there is ever something to account for my mistakes; for it is a humiliating confession, though a true one, to say that it is my lot to be deceived. There is something inexpressively persuasive and convincing to me in an assertion. A child's falsehood has often prevailed over me, and yet, Miss Courtenay, I am not an idiot, I assure you."

He spoke with a gravity which nearly disconcerted Dora.

"I can see you are much inclined to laugh," he resumed; "but you are all wrong. It is idiotic to be so easily deceived, and yet I am no idiot—I maintain it in the face of what has just occurred. Do not protest; but just allow me to follow out my argument. You have read Don Quixote, I have no doubt; well then, has it not struck you that this unfortunate gentleman commits but one error, only it is the first; in all else he is shrewd, clever, sensible, well-informed. This is my case. Ninety-nine things I see clearly; but the hundredth which escapes me is just the keystone of the edifice. If that Dubois had assured me that he was benevolent, humane, a kind husband, a faithful friend, I should have been amused at his attempting to practise on my credulity; but he said I am an untaught genius, and I became his victim!"

Doctor Richard spoke very composedly of his deficiencies, as composedly, indeed, as if they concerned him not. Dora, though she heard him in silence, drew her own conclusions. Though his brown eyes were piercing enough, eyes that could see far and deep, they were more penetrating than shrewd. The glamour of imagination could baffle the keenness of that vision, and Doctor Richard belonged to the class of men who are to be the victims of their inferiors. He knew it, but the knowledge availed him not.

"His very gifts betray him," thought Dora, "and have kept him back in the race of life. Poor fellow," she continued, in her mental soliloquy, as he left her, and walked away briskly, "I am afraid he spends his money very foolishly. What could he want with all those frames, now?"

Dora shook her head at Dr. Richard's imprudence, and was still censuring him when she entered the Gallery.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE were some last touches to be bestowed on the music-lesson, and Dora lingered over her task. For suppose Monsieur Merand should again find fault with this drawing, and utter those severe remarks which, in Dora's present position, it would be so hard to hear? Whilst she was thus engaged in the picture-gallery, she heard a step behind the chair, and looking round in some surprise at the unwonted interruption, she saw Doctor Richard.

"Will you allow me to make one or two suggestions to you, Miss Courtenay?" he said, in his easy way.

Dora assented with a little flush of emotion, which Doctor Richard did not seem to perceive. He proceeded with his suggestions, as he called them; and keen, subtle suggestions they were, implying no small amount of theoretical and practical skill.

"He talks more like a painter than like a doctor," thought Dora, "and, indeed, more like a professor than like either."

"You draw, Doctor Richard?" she could not help saying.

"Yes, I do all my own illustrations," he carelessly replied.

"He is a writer upon art," thought Dora.

But memory, though questioned, remained mute, and had nothing to tell about Doctor Richard's name.

"You did well to take this pretty little music-lesson," he resumed—"here, at least, imagination is free. I am not an inquisitive man, not in the ordinary sense of the word; my neighbor's business troubles me not, but I confess to you that a little picture by one of the minor Dutch painters once gave me many a pleasant hour. The burgher father, the matronly mother, and the daughter fair and blooming, were all primly seated before me. The room was large, rather dark, perhaps, with plenty of plate, and two blue china vases

on an oaken sort of dresser. It was all so minutely painted, that the Eastern pattern of the carpet, the flowering of the brocade in the mother's dress, the fine lace cape of the daughter, were recognizable, and could have been identified. The picture was about two hundred years old. Two hundred years, and their vicissitudes, battles, and generations had passed since that calm home had been somewhere in one of the old Dutch cities. I would have given anything to have had the power of going back for a while to those large oaken rooms, with their substantial furniture—to have conversed with these people, or, if that were too ambitious a desire, considering that I do not know Dutch, to have seen them in their daily life, and household occupations. Surely there must have been some chamber up-stairs in which that merchant kept his money-bags, or reckoned his tulip-bulbs? Surely, too, that good dame must have had her empire in wide store-rooms, with jars of pickles and preserves. As for the young lady, I could imagine her bower with birds, and an embroidery-frame, and a looking-glass in the window. I could imagine all that, but as in a dream; for, after all, this supposed merchant may have been some hard reader, a disciple of Grotius, who stored books, and not gold, and who scorned tulips. His wife, in her way, may have set her mind above mere household comforts, and been a stern Christian, and between these two the poor young damsel probably led a dull life. I doubt if she had birds. Their singing would have disturbed her papa's studies, and her severe mamma held embroidery a profane loss of time, and condemned her to knitting and her Bible. So, you see, here are two totally different versions of the same story; and having found that I could thus construct not two, but twenty, I turned the picture with its face to the wall, and forbade it to speak to me more."

Did he speak in jest or in earnest? Dora

could not tell, but stole a doubtful look at Doctor Richard, but he seemed unconscious of her surprise. He spoke with the composure of one who is unaware of having said any thing unusual, and with the facility which comes from the habit of being listened to.

"Is he a lecturer, an author, or both?" thought Dora; "and yet there is something in him which belongs to none of these—something of the man of the world, who makes himself at home everywhere and with every one."

But if Doctor Richard had no suspicion of the conjectures in which Dora indulged concerning him, he saw very well that her pencil remained idle.

"I must not prevent you from working," he said, smiling; and renewing his promise to call on Mrs. Courtenay in the evening, he left her.

As he walked away, Dora's look followed him a little pensively.

"Poor fellow!" she thought, contrasting his erect figure and easy carriage with his indifferent apparel, "I fear he has been sadly tossed about by life. Medicine, art, authorship have not done much for him!"

But she admired him for all that. She admired him as the independent and the clear-sighted always admire a vigorous and original mind, even though Fortune should not have favored it.

Dora left before the closing of the Gallery; and as she passed by the open library-door on her way down-stairs, she saw Doctor Richard reading within. A heavy folio lay open before him, and he was absorbed in its contents.

"Doctor Richard has not got many patients," thought Dora; "I wonder whether he reads on medicine or on art? And to think of his spending so much money at Monsieur Merand's!"

To receive from and not to spend with that gentleman was now Dora's errand on her way

home. She entered his shop with slight hesitation; but Monsieur Merand was an altered man. The drawing was perfect, and he had but one regret—he must pay Mademoiselle in silver five-franc pieces. But with her bright smile Dora tied up the welcome though cumbersome coins in her pocket-handkerchief, and thus laden, went home.

"Here is news from the Redmore Mines," gayly said Dora, and opening her pocket-handkerchief, she scattered its contents on her mother's bed.

Mrs. Courtenay's eyes glistened as she saw the silver shower.

"It is not that I am so fond of money," she apologetically said; "but then one cannot do without it."

Mrs. Luan was mute, but Dora saw the flush on her sallow cheek, and could read its meaning. Dora felt happy, and happiness is loquacious. She told them how she had worked at her drawing, how gracious Monsieur Merand had been, and in all she said the name of Doctor Richard invariably came back. Mrs. Courtenay was too much pleased with her medical attendant to censure this frequent repetition of his name; but when, even after dinner, Dora took up the theme, Mrs. Luan, who had been almost silent since the preceding day's catastrophe, now looked up, and said sullenly—

"I hate Doctor Richard!"

"Aunt!" cried Dora amazed—too much amazed to be indignant.

"I hate him!" resumed Mrs. Luan; "look at his clothes—shabby; he is no good doctor, not he! He is nothing—no one—nobody."

She was almost excited now. Dora would have answered, and perhaps with less respect and gentleness than she generally showed to Mrs. Luan—for her cheeks were flushed and her eyes sparkled—if Doctor Richard himself had not at that precise moment been shown up by Madame Bertrand.

"A good sign when the patient is lively,"

he said, going to Mrs. Courtenay's bed with a pleasant smile; "but I do not mean to give up my attendance yet. You are not quite well, my dear madam."

"I do not feel quite well, doctor, but much better—oh! so much better," she added with her little raising of the voice.

He sat down by her and felt her pulse. As Mrs. Courtenay drew back her hand the motion disturbed the counterpane, and the five-franc pieces which Dora had left and forgotten there, rolled on the floor with many a silver ring. Doctor Richard gave a little start of surprise, and Dora blushed.

"I put them there to show mamma that I can earn money," she said, trying to laugh it off, "for, thanks to you, Doctor Richard, Monsieur Merand has been liberal."

She began picking up the fallen coins, and Doctor Richard assisted her. When he handed her those which he had gathered he was smiling, and Dora could not help thinking how different was the warm genial face she now looked at, from the dark wrathful countenance she had seen that morning. That was all storm—this was all sunshine.

"I am sure he is good," thought Dora; "he looks as pleased as if that money were his!"

"Doctor Richard," she said aloud, "I met Madame Dubois. She begged hard to be forgiven."

"Will you forgive them, Miss Courtenay?"

"Yes—will not you?"

"No; you know the Chinese saying, 'If I am deceived once, the blame lies with the deceiver; but if I am twice deceived, the blame lies with me.'"

Doctor Richard spoke so positively, that Dora was silenced.

"Now, Miss Courtenay," he resumed, "do not think me, soft as I have proved myself, a victim to the dreadful delusion of the deserving poor. There are such, I suppose, but just as there are deserving rich, in a very

moderate ratio. No, I do not ask for that wonderful bird—a virtuous man in distress. I am satisfied to take humanity such as it is, and relieve its sufferings so far as I can, which is very little; but I have a strong hatred for moral ugliness, and so when I get such a repulsive as the gilder in my path, and can see no redeeming trait in him, I leave him to shift for himself. Some people will be drowned like the man in the story, and who can prevent it? Listen to that drunken wretch now shouting down the street. Who can save him?"

"Poor fellow!" compassionately said Mrs. Courtenay; "it is all the cider. Perhaps you drink wine, Doctor Richard, and do not know how perfidious cider is. I do. When we came here first, I actually got tipsy!" said Mrs. Courtenay, raising her voice in amazement at the strangeness of the fact; "and all for one glass of cider."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Doctor Richard, much amused.

"I did," emphatically continued Mrs. Courtenay. "I came in very warm, and Madame Bertrand would make me taste her cider. I took one glass, and my head began spinning, oh! so much. 'Madame Bertrand,' I cried, 'your cider is very good, but it is very perfidious!' 'Not at all, madame,' she replied; 'you are only a little dizzy.' Doctor Richard, you may believe me, I could not get up-stairs—I had to sit down on the steps; and I must have been really tipsy, for it seems I got so affectionate, and squeezed Madame Bertrand's hand quite fondly. And I talked so—oh! how I did talk! Poor Dora came down to me a little frightened, and what do you think I said to her, doctor? 'Dora,' I said, 'you are a dear, good girl, but I must say it, once for all—I have never told you before, but I must tell you now. You stay too long at your prayers in the morning; and then, Dora, you are too fastidious about your dress. It is all

very well to be pious, and to wear nice collars, but still, Dora, though I like it, I also like not to be kept so long from my breakfast, so please to mend!' Dora was quite bewildered, poor dear! at the lecture, but she helped me up-stairs, and I took a nap in my chair and woke quite well. And that is how I got tipsy on a glass of cider; and, Doctor Richard," added Mrs. Courtenay, raising her voice in wonder at her own suggestion, "think what a terrible effect a good many glasses must have."

Dora had felt rather uncomfortable during this narrative, especially at that portion which referred to the length of her devotions, and the nicety of her collars; but though Doctor Richard seemed much amused, he never looked at her. Moreover, his manner as he listened and spoke to Mrs. Courtenay expressed a gentle and respectful sympathy that went to Dora's very heart. With Dora herself, when he addressed her, his tone, his looks, his bearing, were those of a friend—kind, but not too familiar. His manner, which had been a little abrupt at first, was now tempered by a refinement and a courtesy which to Dora seemed both rare and delightful. She thought she had never met with so perfect a gentleman. Did her bright open face betray her secret admiration, or was it part of Doctor Richard's plan to fascinate both mother and daughter? Even a keen observer might have failed to settle this question, but the dullest must have seen that Doctor Richard bestowed a considerable portion of his attention on Miss Courtenay. Even when he spoke to her mother, it was on Dora that his eyes rested. Few people had ever looked at this girl coldly, the light in her face compelled corresponding warmth in the gazer, and Doctor Richard obeyed the general rule. When she spoke he smiled and listened with evident pleasure to the little sallies by which she endeavored to amuse her mother. When she was silent his gaze wandered toward her,

and rested on her radiant face and light figure, with evident enjoyment. She was like a Titian or a Giorgione to him, a glorious bit of color lighting those dull rooms, and contrasting in its brightness with the paleness and subdued tints of age, as seen in Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan.

Now there is a subject on which women have a quickness of perception nothing can baffle—it is the impression they produce. Dora knew, as well as if Doctor Richard had sworn it, that he admired her. She had been accustomed to such admiration formerly, and had received it too often to be mistaken now. What she saw, Mrs. Courtenay saw too, only she drew maternal conclusions which Dora left in abeyance—that Doctor Richard was a very fascinating man, a very kind one, too; how delightful if he were to marry Dora! Good, innocent soul! She never looked at Doctor Richard's coat, nor asked herself how he could keep a wife and rear a family! The future had, in more senses than one, ever been a sealed book to this amiable and improvident lady. Mrs. Luan, too, being a woman, saw what was going on, and conjectured. Her slow, dull mind fastened on Doctor Richard's admiration of her niece with the tenacity of a leech, and extracted all that such admiration could possibly yield.

She already disliked the man, as the bearer of woeful tidings; she now hated him as being poor, and coming to the house to rob them of their only support. In her sluggish way she had thought over their position, since the preceding morning, and she had realized the fact that Dora was now their mainstay. John would help; but Mrs. Luan could not bear to rob poor John, and she was willing to lean heavily, if need be, upon her niece.

Such being the case, why did that needy doctor come hankering after Dora? They did not want him. Let him, begone, with his shabby clothes and look of decayed gentility!

For that Doctor Richard's admiration might be the disinterested feeling which many men yield to a young and fascinating woman, Mrs. Luan did not admit in that moment of selfish terror. She only saw the danger; and she not merely saw it, but she magnified it tenfold.

Doctor Richard was too quick and observant not to become aware of Mrs. Luan's hard, intent look. It annoyed him, yet, thanks to the blindness of which he was uselessly conscious, its meaning was not apparent to him. He saw a dull, heavy-looking lady, with a hideous piece of patch-work on her lap, and he felt that there was something unpleasant to him, almost repugnant in her aspect; but he never thought that this low-browed woman was the Nemesis of his life. He never thought, as, after spending an hour or more with Mrs. Courtenay and her daughter, he took his leave, that the woman who rose and gave him a cold, lifeless hand, was the arbitress of his fate; that from her would spring the greatest sorrows and the greatest joys of his existence. That this being, his moral and intellectual inferior, would nevertheless rule him with a rod of iron in weal and in woe, Doctor Richard never suspected.

"Poor thing! she is predestined to a brain disease," was his medical conclusion, as he looked at her.

CHAPTER XV.

WHAT subtle and mysterious chain of small events is it which we so often qualify as inevitable? Is there anything not immediately dependent on God's will to which "inevitable" does really apply? Are we not free to avoid or to seek? Could we not walk on the right side of the road as well as on the left? Must we perforce take that turning instead of this? If we go on board the boat which is to perish, might we not have sailed in that which, after crossing smooth seas, will come to port

safely? Inevitable, forsooth! It is the word of presumption and of weakness, the excuse for all short-sighted folly, the plea of all error, slight or fatal.

That "inevitable," as it is called, was now busy with Dora Courtenay's destiny. Her mother got well again. Even Mrs. Luan recovered the shock of the Redmore Mines; a trifle was saved out of the wreck; poor John Luan wrote an affectionate letter, and sent twenty pounds; and Monsieur Merand ordered a series of drawings, which kept Dora in constant occupation. All this was as it should be—was, at least, as it often is in life, where the waters flow smoothly again over the greatest wrecks, but the supererogation was in the continued visits of Doctor Richard. He came to see Mrs. Courtenay, and perhaps because her complaint was mental rather than bodily, he came more as a friend than as a doctor. He wished to cheer her, and he succeeded. His conversation was attractive and varied—the conversation of a well-read man; he had also a beautiful voice, mellow, harmonious, and full-toned, and Mrs. Courtenay once frankly told him it was like music to hear him. His society, in short, was both genial and interesting, and Dora's mother was getting accustomed to it, and required it as much as her cup of tea in the evening, when it suddenly ceased.

"I wonder why Doctor Richard comes no more?" rather plaintively said Mrs. Courtenay.

"Because you are quite well, mamma," replied Dora, trying not to look as disappointed as she felt.

For Doctor Richard had grown invisible. Neither when she passed by his house, nor in the picture-gallery, nor in the reading-room, nor even at Monsieur Merand's, did Dora see him. And there now fell a restlessness upon her, of which she herself knew not the cause. She worked, she played, she read, she sewed,

she was never idle a second, and yet something ailed Dora.

"What a pity Doctor Richard is not a friend of ours," she sometimes thought, "it used to do me good when he came. His fancies are rather wild sometimes, and one does not exactly know when he is in jest or in earnest; but he used to set me thinking, and I feel the want of it now that he is gone. It is wonderful all I learned from him when he came and stood behind my chair and advised me. Some of his criticisms were so many rays of light. I know I want a critic, and mamma and aunt admire all I do."

But requisite though his presence was to Dora, Doctor Richard came not. Then she did her best to remember all that this judicious critic had said. And memory brought it all back to Dora. Looks, words, the very intonation with which they had been spoken, returned so vividly that it sometimes seemed Doctor Richard himself stood by. And she never asked herself why she thus brought this stranger in her life, when he had evidently sought another path than that which she trod — why she compelled him to be thus with her in spirit, when his will kept him so far away in body.

Some of the ancient philosophers thought that a man could be struck with a thunderbolt and neither know nor feel it. Perhaps they came to this strange conclusion from their knowledge of what happens in the mysterious world of a human heart. There, indeed, the thunderbolt may fall, and leave us unaware of its presence. The great calamity, the crowning sorrow of our life, may have come to us, and we may not even suspect it, so sudden and so invisible was its approach. If such a grief had come to Dora, her ignorance of it was complete. She felt dull, and reason telling her she had no cause for such dullness, that she led a useful, active life, with many legitimate sources of interest in it, she argued

against herself, and resisted the enemy; but, unluckily, reason too often took Doctor Richard's voice, and spoke in his language.

Dora was sitting with her mother and Mrs. Luan. It was evening-time; the lamp, with its green shade, gave a circle of light on the table, and left the room in a soft brown gloom, through which you caught dim outlines of furniture, with here and there a speck of light from some bit of china or gilt frame on the wall. Mrs. Luan was engaged on her patchwork, Mrs. Courtenay was busy with a game of patience, and Dora was mending linen. They were very silent, but the wind moaned without, and now and then a gust brought a heavy pattering shower of rain against the window-panes.

"How different it would all be if Dr. Richard were here!" thought Dora, and a thrill passed through her at the thought; "then, instead of this heavy silence, we should hear his full, genial voice talking pleasant wisdom, or no less pleasant paradox. How he would preach me out of this dullness of mine, if he knew of it! How he did go on about *ennui* the last time he came! Was it the last? 'Depend upon it, Miss Courtenay,' he said, 'the great drama of ninety-three was hastened by the feeling which the French call *ennui*. There must have been dreadful weariness in that pompous old Versailles, with its routine, and its endless round of solemn gayeties. These long-clipped avenues, and statues, and vases, and water-works, looking all so formal in the bright hot sun, made one pine for variety. Anything for a change. So welcome Voltaire, welcome Rousseau, welcome that insolent barber Figaro, who sapped so gayly the foundations of the old *régime*. Welcome, above all, the *Encyclopédie*. There is a charm about impiety when all else fails. The end, to be sure, was tragic, and seas of blood had to flow ere the safe shore was reached; but then, for a few years, at least, the French na-

tion was saved from *ennui*—an inestimable blessing, Miss Courtenay, for so lively a nation.”

Yes, thus had Doctor Richard spoken; and as she recalled his language, and wisely admonished herself with it, Dora seemed to see Doctor Richard himself sitting in yonder vacant chair, and looking at her across the table with those genial brown eyes, in which he could put no small amount of mirth and humor. The vision brought no blush to Dora’s cheek, no emotion to her heart; but it was pleasant, though brief.

“What a pity he does not like our society as much as we like his!” she thought, honestly; “but it is no great wonder. It must be dull to come and sit here with us, and yet I am selfish enough to wish that he would come again!”

As she confessed thus much to herself, her mother pushed the cards away, and exclaimed, a little pettishly:

“How dull you both are! I wish Doctor Richard would come in,” she added.

Dora could not help smiling at this coincidence in their wishes.

“But you are not ill, mamma,” she said, gayly, “so why should he come?”

“Not ill!” replied Mrs. Courtenay, looking much injured—“and pray, how do you know that I am not ill?”

“But I may hope, mamma, you are not so,” gravely answered her daughter.

“I do not feel at all well,” triumphantly rejoined Mrs. Courtenay, sitting up in her chair and looking around her with a sort of exultation at her superiority over her daughter and her sister-in-law—“I have the most extraordinary buzzing in my right ear.”

Spite this ominous symptom, Dora testified no great uneasiness, and Mrs. Courtenay saw it and looked offended.

“I think you might send round for Doctor Richard,” she said a little warmly; “I really

think you might, Dora, seeing me so poorly.”

“But, mamma,” argued Dora, “you were so well a while ago, that it seems a pity to disturb Doctor Richard uselessly.”

“Uselessly!” exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, raising her voice in mingled amazement and indignation. “Uselessly! when I tell you I am quite poorly, and when Dr. Richard has only to cross the street to come to us.”

Dora did not reply, but bent her burning face over her work. She felt ashamed to send for Doctor Richard without cause, and she longed to do so, yet did not dare to indulge that longing. For suppose it should affront him to be disturbed from his reading? A while ago she had stood at the window and looked down the street, and she had seen a light burning in Doctor Richard’s casement; sure proof that he was within. What right had they to intrude on his solitude? But Mrs. Courtenay could be wilful when she chose; she now persuaded herself that she was very unwell indeed, and that it was quite unkind of Dora not to send for Doctor Richard, and what she thought she said. Thus urged, Dora hesitated, then at length yielded.

Madame Bertrand was much amazed at Mrs. Courtenay’s sudden illness; but obligingly went to fetch Doctor Richard at once, whilst Dora sat in her vacant chair. She wanted to see Doctor Richard before he went up-stairs, and to make some apology for thus disturbing him. But there was no need to do so. Madame Bertrand came back alone. The house was locked up—Doctor Richard was gone.

“And when he goes away,” added Madame Bertrand, “it is for days and weeks.”

“Then how do his patients manage?”

“He has no regular patients,” replied Madame Bertrand. “My impression,” she confidentially continued, “is, that he goes about the country bleeding, extracting teeth, and so on; and when he has made a little money, he

comes back here and buys a heap of rubbish with it."

Dora laughed at this vision of an itinerant doctor, and went back to her mother, who looked much injured on learning that Doctor Richard had probably left Rouen.

Days passed on, and he did not return. Dora asked Monsieur Merand if it was Doctor Richard's habit to forsake his patients thus without warning.

"Patients!—he has none. Besides," he tapped his forehead—"hem! you know."

"Indeed I know nothing of the kind," replied Dora, gravely; "and if I thought so, Doctor Richard should certainly not attend on my mother."

Monsieur Merand looked alarmed.

"Do not tell him I said so!" he exclaimed, hastily; "I do not wish to injure him, poor fellow! He wants all the money he can earn. He is as poor as Job, you know."

He stared at Dora as if to see the effect his words produced upon her. To all seeming they produced none. She went away, looking rather pensive; but no other expression save that of thoughtfulness appeared on her face.

Two days later, however, Dora came home looking so bright and gay, that Mrs. Courtenay cried—

"My dear, what has happened? Are the Redmore Mines coming up?"

"No; but a child was run over, and—"

"My goodness! is that why you look so delighted?"

Dora blushed, and Mrs. Luan stared at her.

"Monsieur Merand wants a new drawing," said Dora, apologetically, "and as I was talking to him Doctor Richard came in carrying a poor little thing that had just been run over. I helped him to undress it; for the child has got an untidy mother, and he had pricked himself awfully with the pins. I also assisted in bandaging its poor little leg; but I did little good there, for Doctor Richard said I was no

heroine, after all. I know I was as pale as a ghost."

"You are not pale now," remarked Mrs. Luan.

"No, I came home so fast, mamma!" she added, turning to her mother. "Doctor Richard will look in upon you this evening."

"Who wants him?" almost angrily said Mrs. Luan.

"Aunt, why do you dislike Doctor Richard?" asked her niece. "I wish you had seen how kind and tender he was with the child; and when I got her to tell me her name and abode, and he went off with her in a cab, Monsieur Merand said to me, 'Do you know why he does not send that object to the hospital?—because he means to feed as well as cure it.'"

"What right has he to give away?" asked Mrs. Luan, still gloomy. "He is too poor to give."

"The poor give more away than the rich," rather indignantly said Dora.

Mrs. Luan's answer was to take off her cap and fling it on the sofa.

"How often she does that now!" thought Dora. "I wonder if I ought to mention it to Doctor Richard?"

But another of the self-woven links of fate was around her, for on reflection she resolved to be silent.

"We shall wait tea for Doctor Richard," said Mrs. Courtenay. Dora assented, and Mrs. Luan went and put on her cap and looked sulky.

The evening was a warm one, and Dora went and sat by the open window. A faint breeze came from the river up the quiet street, which seemed to sleep in gray shadow. How calm all these ancient houses looked in their decaying age!—how pathetic in its way was that bit of green up amongst the buttresses of the poor old church crumbling away to ruin, with these bright flowers and that joyous

vine growing, as it were, out of its stone heart!

"Poor thing!" thought Dora, with a sort of pity, "it does its best to be beautiful to the last! I wonder how it looked on the day of its consecration five hundred years ago, when it was first opened to human worship? It was bright and strong and new then. Every one of its outlines was sharply chiselled; every one of its ornaments was painted in gaudy blue, deep violet, strong red, or pure gold. Doctor Richard, I remember, told me once we can have no idea of the revel of color in those mediæval times. We are too apt to fancy them gray and stern as they look to us now, through the dimness of so many hundred years."

Her thoughts had gone thus far when the sound of a step up the street made her look down. She saw Doctor Richard coming slowly, and as his look was never once raised to the window, she could scrutinize him as closely as she pleased. He looked pale and somewhat worn.

"He has had trouble," thought Dora; "but what trouble? His carriage is not erect and free as it used to be."

"I wish Doctor Richard would come," a little querulously said Mrs. Courtenay; "I confess I want my tea."

"He is coming, mamma," answered Dora, leaving the window.

They soon heard him talking below to Madame Bertrand, who in a loud, plaintive voice informed him that she had been dreadfully ill during his absence.

"Such pains as she had had in all her limbs!" Then followed a separate description of each particular pain, after which came Doctor Richard's prescription.

"Madame Bertrand is a very good sort of woman," superciliously said Mrs. Courtenay, "but she does take liberties. To think of her keeping Doctor Richard in that way!"

Doctor Richard's entrance put an end to the cause of her displeasure.

"I am so glad to see you, Doctor Richard!" she cried warmly; "I was so sorry you were away—and, goodness me! where have you been all this time?"

She looked at him with the most innocent curiosity beaming in her face.

"I have been in the country with one of my patients," he replied quietly.

"Then he has patients," thought Dora.

"Is it pretty about there?" asked Mrs. Courtenay—"I mean the landscape, you know."

Doctor Richard smiled.

"Yes," he said, "it is pretty according to the present day's idea of beauty; for I need scarcely tell you, Mrs. Courtenay, that the beauty of a landscape is as much subject to the laws of fashion as a lady's dress."

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, amazed; "I never knew that!"

"It is a fact, I assure you," he gravely replied; "Switzerland and the Highlands are going down, like Byron's poetry. The fast generation which is coming on will probably call Mont Blanc an old impostor—I use a mild word—and scorn the Trosachs."

"I cannot say that I admire them much myself," confidentially said Mrs. Courtenay—"not that I ever saw them, I confess," she frankly added.

"To see is by no means necessary for admiration or dislike," returned Doctor Richard, with unmoved gravity, "since either is a matter of fashion. The fact is, the sublime will soon be pronounced a bore. We are getting tired of it. Even the Romans got wearied of their classical landscape, and one of their latter poets complained that he knew the woods of Mars and the cave of Vulcan as well as his own house. We are in the same predicament. We know it all too well."

"Is commonplace so old, Doctor Richard?" asked Dora, with a merry laugh.

"Do not laugh at it, Miss Courtenay. Commonplace is one of the powers that be, and will make you rue it."

Doctor Richard spoke in a tone of grave rebuke, which roused Dora's mirth anew.

"Dora has a horror of commonplace," remarked Mrs. Courtenay. "Such a charming man as Mr. Brown was, and he admired Dora so much; but she thought him commonplace."

"And was he not revenged upon Miss Courtenay?" asked Doctor Richard, without noticing the blush which this indiscreet revelation brought up to Dora's cheek.

"Oh! yes," innocently answered Mrs. Courtenay; "he was our banker, and he took all our money."

"The thief!" said Mrs. Luan. "It was her money he wanted!"

"Oh! but he did admire Dora," retorted Mrs. Courtenay, a little jealously. "He said her hair was like dark gold!"

Dora shook her head, and a meaning, half-rueful, half-comic, passed across her expressive face.

"I am afraid the gold he admired was more substantial than that which Nature has given me!" she said. "At all events, not feeling sure of obtaining the one, he took care to secure the other."

"The thief!" said Mrs. Luan again.

Dora laughed, and her clear, ringing laugh showed how far all thought of care was from her just then.

"He has done me good service, aunt," she said; "but for him I should never have known I was a little bit of a genius in the way of drawing. Oh! Doctor Richard," she added, suddenly becoming grave, and fastening an earnest look on his face, "I do wish you would tell me the truth—I do not mean the polite truth, but the whole truth—about these drawings of mine. It seems to me at times that I must be laboring under a pleasant delusion. Here am I earning plenty of money, and all

for such commonplace performances. It is incredible."

Now, neither Mrs. Courtenay nor Mrs. Luan liked this imprudent speech, and neither gave Doctor Richard time to reply.

"My dear, you draw beautifully," cried Mrs. Courtenay.

"Monsieur Merand does not give you half enough," said Mrs. Luan; "a cheat, like the rest of them. I hate the French!" she heartily added.

"You hate the French!" cried Mrs. Courtenay.

"Mamma!" implored Dora.

Mrs. Courtenay was magnanimous, and made a sign implying that she would take no notice of the insult.

"Do tell me the truth, Doctor Richard," resumed Dora. "What are my drawings worth? You know. Do tell me how far I can rely, for instance, on my talent as a means of support."

She spoke very gravely, and leaning back in her chair, looked with rather sad earnestness at Doctor Richard. Now, Doctor Richard, who was usually so gay, so composed, so much of a man of the world, for once looked thoroughly disconcerted.

"My dear Miss Courtenay," he said, trying to rally, "the terms Monsieur Merand gives you are a test of the value of your drawings. That you draw well, very well, I have often told you, and I say so again."

He spoke so emphatically that a bright, happy blush stole over Dora's face, and made it as fresh and glowing as a young Aurora's. If Doctor Richard had been more polite than truthful, he was rewarded for his sin by so radiant a smile, and a look so bright that, whilst they lasted, they made Dora's countenance the most bewitching he had ever seen. Joy, not vanity, innocent triumph, did that beaming face express, till, as if ashamed of her own gladness, Dora tried to laugh it off by saying:

"Your verdict is so favorable, Doctor Rich-

ard, that I will believe every word of it, and seek to know no more. And now, do tell us something about your little patient."

There was not much to tell, but Mrs. Courtenay uttered little screams of horror, and little screams of relief, according as Catherine's state was described; and Dora listened and thought Doctor Richard's conversation delightful, and without saying anything about it at home, called on the injured child the next morning, on her way to the Picture-gallery.

Catherine, who had a temper of her own, was in a towering passion, and screaming at the pitch of her shrill voice, when, after crossing a damp court-yard, Dora entered the chill and dark room in which Catherine's mother lived. The child was kicking violently in her bed—kicking is one of the infantine protests most in use in every country; her mother vainly tried to soothe her, and Doctor Richard stood looking on helplessly with a linen bandage in his hand, when the door opened, and the bright face of Dora appeared amongst them.

"Some good angel sent you to tame this little lioness!" said Doctor Richard, gayly; "now we shall get on."

Dora smiled and looked doubtful; but mothers cannot always charm their own children, and there is a sweet and natural freemasonry between youth and childhood. Dora had scarcely sat down by Catherine, and taken her hand, when the child ceased crying, stared, and finally smiled.

"You are accustomed to children," said Doctor Richard, with a keen look.

"Not at all."

"A natural gift, then. Yes, children are wonderful physiognomists."

His look rested on her bright face with that complacency which such bright faces as hers ever inspire. "Am I getting vain?" thought Dora, ashamed at the glow of pleasure which overspread her countenance. "Granted

that he admires me, need I be any the prouder for it?"

Oh! if wisdom would but come at our call, or, what would often be as great a boon, if a truer and a keener knowledge of our inner self than we have were granted to us in the crisis of existence! If we could know the why and wherefore of much that we care not perhaps to scrutinize too closely, and scan our own springs of feeling and action as they rise within us—if we could do all this, how different a lot might be ours! But there is a languid pleasure in ignorance. To see through a mist, to hear as in a dream, to be borne down the tide of life, and idly played with by its waves, instead of bravely swimming our way to shore against them—all these things are fraught with a perilous sweetness. Happy, but surely few, are they who know how to resist that seducing torpor ere it be too late to repel it. Some forewarning Dora felt, however, for after putting on the bed of the little sufferer the sweetmeats she had brought it, she rose to go. Doctor Richard looked injured.

"Will you not stay and manage her whilst I dress her leg?" he asked.

Thus adjured, Dora remained. Doctor Richard expressed himself highly satisfied with the state of the injured limb.

"I dare say the little creature will be able to get into mischief again," he said, gayly; "and of course she will do, so, with that careless mother of hers. Pity," he thoughtfully added, "one cannot stop the growth of some children, put them in cages, and hang them up like canary birds. Look at this child, Miss Courtenay—she is lovely, with delicate, refined features, and if her great-great-ancestor had only been a baker, or a butler, or a groom in William the Conqueror's train, we should now have her portrait in a book of beauty, and be told in the letter-press how the infantine features, etc., of the honorable Adeline

Fitz-Norman, etc., were the purest model of the Anglo-Norman type so remarkable in the English aristocracy, etc. I am really sorry I am not acquainted with this young lady's Scandinavian pedigree. For all we know, she may be a lineal descendant of Rollo himself. I am afraid you will think me a man of insatiable curiosity, Miss Courtenay, but lost pedigrees are one of my torments. I believe in race, in the transmission of form and feature, of mind, and of certain defects and qualities. Now, I want to know what has become, for instance, of the descendants of the Scipios, the Gracchi, the Julii, and *tutti quanti* of those famous old Romans who are the misery of our childhood. I want to know it, for I owe them a grudge, and should like to pay it out. But a Barbarian tide, leaving behind it an endless Gothic sea, has swept away every sure token of the past. It is impossible to doubt but that some of those renowned families still flourish—only where are they? Blood of inestimable value flows in their veins, but this rare treasure not being apprehensible by any of our senses, its possessors live and die unconscious of their own greatness. I always felt convinced that my washerwoman in Rome had been an empress—I mean in the person of one of her ancestors, for the transmigration of souls is not one of my doctrines—and that Benedetto, the facchino, was a remote cousin of Catiline's. He had the man's audacious subtlety, even as he had his features. Unlucky wretch! he had no knowledge of his illustrious ancestry! I had a great mind to enlighten him, but forbore, lest I should render him too much dissatisfied with his humble lot; for, you see, I can temper my fancies with a certain amount of prudence, Miss Courtenay."

Doctor Richard was sitting on the edge of the child's bed as he spoke thus, with much composure and his usual fluency. Dora, leaning back in her chair with her portfolio on her knees, looked at him thoughtfully.

"He must have some little income," she thought, "some slender provision between him and want. The tone and substance of his remarks—and how strangely he does talk!—both tell of leisure. I believe he likes his profession; but, poor fellow, I fear it does not like him."

Spite the patient in the country, Dora did not think Doctor Richard a busy or a prosperous man. He had been with the child before she came, he stayed when she now rose to go, and she had scarcely been an hour in the picture-gallery, when Doctor Richard stood behind her chair. He did not remain long, however; he had to go and read in the library, he said.

"I want to get the song of Roland," he informed Dora, "I want to get back to Romance and Roncevaux, and the mighty horn and Durandal, the heroic sword, and Oliver and Ganelon, and above all, to that grand death-scene, when Archbishop Turpin blesses the dead and dying heroes, and then dies himself, leaving Roland, as was but fitting, to die last, with all these noble knights lying around him. Do you read old French, Miss Courtenay? No! what a pity. There are some rare treasures here."

Now, Dora, being but mortal, thought she could give Doctor Richard a little useful hint toward practical wisdom.

"I must work, not read," she said, demurely.

"Work," good-humoredly replied Doctor Richard, "is one of the modern mistakes. We are born to be as well as to act, and thinking is one of the many forms of action, whatever matter of fact may say. So I keep to my creed, and venture to blame yours."

"Oh! but I do read," said Dora, blushing; "but I have little time and few books."

"Then, as I have the command of a large library, allow me to lend you some. You will find the catalogue at Madame Bertrand's, and can mark the volumes you prefer."

Dora looked so happy as she turned round, that Doctor Richard exclaimed gayly,

"Come, you are a reader, after all!"

But he gave her no time to stammer her thanks; before they were half uttered he was gone.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE catalogue was waiting for Dora on Madame Bertrand's table when she went home. "How kind he is!" she thought; but to her sense of that kindness succeeded surprise when on looking over the catalogue she saw how valuable and extensive a collection was thus placed at her command. Doctor Richard seemed to know no one in Rouen; this library must belong to his patient in the country. But that patient did not seem to take up much of Doctor Richard's time.

Early though it was when Dora called on Catherine the next morning, Doctor Richard was already with the child. He was alone with her too, and pulling the string of a little pasteboard puppet to amuse her. He stood with his back to the door, and did not see Dora.

"Faster!" said Catherine, who lay in her bed looking on gravely at Doctor Richard's performance—"do it faster."

"So," suggested Doctor Richard, giving the figure such a jerk, that its legs and arms both shot out in horizontal directions, "is that right?"

"No," was Catherine's peevish reply, and she turned her head aside and shut her eyes.

Dora now approached, and Doctor Richard turned round and saw her.

"Good-morning, Miss Courtenay," he said, gravely; "you find me verifying the truth of that saying, uttered by a woman of genius, that we are all born kings. This young lady, I can assure you, is born a queen. I offered to stay with her whilst her mother went out

on some necessary errand, and all the return I have got for my kindness is that she has neither screamed, nor kicked, nor attempted to bite. In all else I have been treated with the most absolute contempt. Well, well," he added, sitting down on the edge of the bed, and looking down kindly on the little creature, who still kept her eyes shut, "this brief royalty is the compensation granted by Nature for all the future maltreatment of society. And after all, Miss Courtenay, is not life full of such atonements? My belief is, that the 'Arabian Nights,' for instance, and all such stories of enchantment and buried treasure, were meant to charm the poor man into a more patient endurance of his barren life. It is glorious to finger diamonds and pearls, and have the wealth of an emperor, even though it be but for a moment. But the most glorious bit of all is, to be Haroun-al-Raschid—to go about the streets of Bagdad at night with Giafar and Mesrour, and set every wrong right again—to give a bastinado to this man, and a purse of gold to t'other one. Happy Caliph!"

"The 'Arabian Nights' are amongst the books you so kindly offered to lend me," said Dora; "and I confess that, not having read them since I was a child, I have asked for them."

"And for Macchiavel's 'Prince?'" he said, glancing over the list she handed him. "Do you really wish for that book, Miss Courtenay?" He looked up at her in surprise.

"I do," frankly answered Dora; "Mr. Ryan would never let me read it. He would not help to ruin my political principles, he said; and I confess that famous book has all the charm of forbidden fruit for me."

"You shall have it. I shall play the part of serpent in this temptation, since you are so willing to be Eve. But you will be disappointed, for, woman-like, I dare say you will run away with your first impression. And yet, you see, this Macchiavel deserves consid-

eration. He was one of the few pitchers who go to the well and do not come back as empty as they went. But for all that you will be disappointed."

"I am not such a girl, nor yet so ignorant a girl as Doctor Richard imagines," thought Dora, a little displeased. "I suppose he considers Macehiavel's pitcher too full for me. I require something more readable—something that will do between the last sweet crochet-stitch or the new quadrille. Paul was not so. He thought nothing above or beyond his sister."

Unconscious of offence, Doctor Richard once more devoted his attention to Catherine, who had opened one eye, then the other, and who finally uttered an imperious "Give it to me," referring to the puppet.

Whilst he was engaged with the child, Dora rose to go.

"You leave me to my fate!" he said, reproachfully.

"Yes," she answered, smiling, "I do;" and she went thinking, "Am I getting vain, that I care so much for what Doctor Richard may care for me?"

Alas! it was not vanity that stung her then. She did not know it, yet something she vaguely felt, for she went no more to see the sick child in the morning. She thus missed meeting Doctor Richard, but not hearing about him. Catherine's mother was full of his praises, especially after he had given her ten francs for an old cracked plate not worth ten sous. Dora sighed over Doctor Richard's improvidence. What wonder that he had not been a successful man when he spent his time and money thus! But she forgot his sins the very first time he came to see them. Her color deepened and her eyes lit as she heard his step and voice coming up the staircase one evening. Mrs. Courtenay uttered a little scream of delight, and immediately poured him out a cup of tea.

Doctor Richard took it, though he also excused himself for calling so late, but he had met Madame Bertrand, and that lady had told him Mrs. Courtenay was not quite well. But Mrs. Courtenay was ill when she pleased, and not when it pleased other people that she should be so. She looked affronted with Madame Bertrand's officiousness.

"Very foolish of her," she said, stiffly; then relaxing into her usual good-humor, she added, confidentially, "I was not ill, Doctor Richard; I was only purring."

"Purring!" he said, a little surprised.

"Yes," triumphantly resumed Mrs. Courtenay. "When people get to my age they take to purring, Doctor Richard—that is to say, they like to sit and mause and think over bygones, and close it all with a nap sometimes. And you will purr too with time, and very nice you will find it. I wanted Dora to do it the other evening when I could see she felt dull; but young people are saucy, and so she answered that she was a kitten, and could not purr yet."

"But kittens do purr, Miss Courtenay," argued Doctor Richard, looking with evident amusement at Dora's flushed face.

"So I told her," cried Mrs. Courtenay, without giving Dora time to put in a word; "but she is an obstinate girl, Doctor Richard. Purring is too quiet for her, and she says she would as soon be the painted Griselidis on her bedroom curtains, as sit and purr."

"But Miss Courtenay sits long and patiently at the Gallery," said Doctor Richard.

How kindly he spoke!

"He may be improvident," thought Dora; "but he is our countryman, we meet in a foreign land, and surely we may take pleasure in his society, and deal leniently with his faults; these are but the excesses of a fine, generous nature. Ah! how delightful it would be if he would but continue to come and see us every now and then! His very presence brings warmth with it."

Thus she thought; but if there had not been a bandage over Dora's eyes, she might have seen that the cordiality with which Doctor Richard was received in their home had generated no confidence on his part. He was quite familiar with all their concerns—of his they knew literally nothing. Now, strangely enough, the first to be struck with this fact was Mrs. Luan. The perception had been coming to her for some time, everything she now heard and saw confirmed it, and with it other suspicions which she had long had. She brooded over them in her usual sulky silence, however, and went on with her patch-work, seemingly absorbed in it.

Doctor Richard seemed to take particular pleasure in Dora's company this evening. She felt happy, and looked as bright as sunshine. The genial light in her face did Doctor Richard good. He had been severed for some time from all pleasant society, almost as completely severed as Dora herself. So no wonder that he enjoyed looking at the face and listening to the voice of this radiant girl. If he liked her society, his was new to her, as, indeed, it ever was, like manna after the long fast to the Israelites. It was so pleasant to talk about something beyond the commonplace occurrences of daily life! Never did danger and temptation wear a subtler guise than did these. So they talked of many things. A good deal of drawing, in which Doctor Richard gave Dora some excellent advice; a good deal of music, with the theory of which he was thoroughly conversant, and more than all of books, which were evidently the food of his life.

Now, perhaps, because Dora took evidently great pleasure in listening to Doctor Richard, was her danger so very plain this evening to Mrs. Luan. She watched him. He looked very well. He was attired, too, in a respectable suit of black, which Mrs. Luan had not given him credit for possessing. Altogether

he seemed to be enjoying himself, and, as Mrs. Luan saw, Dora engrossed him almost entirely. As soon as tea was over he asked to see her last drawing. She went and fetched it somewhat diffidently. She had learned to think a great deal of, and, indeed, to dread Doctor Richard's most lenient criticism. Perhaps a subtle, unacknowledged desire of pleasing him in everything might be at the root of that feeling. Doctor Richard looked at the drawing in silence—in silence, too, he gave it back to her; he noticed her flushed cheek and troubled look, but her nervous little hands shaking as she tied the strings of the portfolio he did not see.

"It is not good, is it?" asked Dora, unable to bear the suspense of silence.

"Far from it. It is very good, indeed; but I am accustomed to that from you, Miss Courtenay."

The blood rushed up to her face and dyed it with the most beautiful rosy glow, but she bent over the portfolio, and Doctor Richard saw nothing, or, at least, he seemed to see nothing.

"But as I looked," he resumed, "I thought of the paintings in the Campo Santo of Pisa—something in one of your figures brought back the whole spot to my mind in a second; and, to be frank with you, I was there, not here, for the time being."

"What figure?" quickly asked Dora.

"That of the youth. He is like one of the cavaliers in Orgagna's Triumph of Death."

Dora looked pensive.

"The triumph of death!" she repeated; "what can that be like?"

"Like life. Youths and ladies, with falcons and dogs, sit beneath orange-trees. They have been hunting and hawking, and they are tired. A troubadour and a singing-girl entertain them. Cupids are abroad, too, as they usually are in such company—but Death is coming—Death, a terrible woman, with sharp claws, bat's wings, and a scythe."

"An impressive picture," said Dora, slowly—it seemed to be painted for her on the thin air as she spoke, and it was painful, exquisitely painful. The thought of death was abhorrent to her then, and chilled her very heart.

"Yes, impressive enough," was his careless answer; "but so is that newspaper, Miss Courtenay. Take it up, and you will find its births, marriages, and deaths, as impressive as any homily. Orgagna's merit is that he just painted what he saw—all in his fresco is real, save the figure of Death."

"When did you see that?" asked Mrs. Luan.

She so seldom spoke, that they all looked at her. Doctor Richard answered composedly:

"It was some years ago."

Dora rose and put away her portfolio, and, as she did so, she wondered what had taken him to Italy.

Mrs. Luan spoke again.

"From what part of Ireland do you come, Doctor Richard?"

The question was a natural one enough; the only wonder was it had not been put before this evening. Yet Dora saw just a shade of annoyance cross Dr. Richard's countenance as Mrs. Luan spoke.

"I come from Kerry," he briefly replied, and with less than his usual courtesy he turned at once from Mrs. Luan to Dora, and said quickly, "We were speaking of the Irish melodies, Miss Courtenay. Am I to conclude that you prefer 'Eileen Aroon' to 'Gramachree?'"

"Gramachree!" repeated Dora, not understanding at first.

"Yes, that fine melody to which Moore set his words of 'The Harp that once through Tara's Halls.'"

Mrs. Luan was decidedly excited this evening.

"I hate Mr. Templemore," she said—"a swindler, a cheat! He cheated Paul, he

cheated John, he cheated Dora out of Mr. Courtenay's money!"

They all remained aghast at this unexpected outbreak. Doctor Richard looked as surprised as a well-bred man ever allows himself to look. Mrs. Courtenay spoke at length:

"My dear," she said, "it was not cheating."

"It was," insisted Mrs. Luan, whose hands shook over her patchwork.

"No, aunt, it was not," said Dora, quietly; then turning to Doctor Richard, she gave such explanation as this brief scene required. "An uncle of ours left his property to that Mr. Templemore, and though he is not to blame, there are such painful recollections connected with his name, that it is never mentioned among us."

Doctor Richard bent his head in token of assent, and changed the subject. Painting had led to questions, music to a scene—he tried literature.

"How do you like Macchiavel's 'Prince?'" he asked.

Dora gave him no direct answer, but looking at him earnestly, she said:

"You surely do not admire that man, Doctor Richard?"

"I beg your pardon, I do—dear, candid old boy! Hear him on the subject of Conquest. Do you wish to conquer a kingdom, Miss Courtenay? Why, then, take care to exterminate the native princes whom you rob. Or have you injured your neighbor?—a common case—well, then, if you cannot conciliate, kill him! When you injure a man, do not leave it in his power to be revenged. I declare I admire the man prodigiously. It is quite comfortable to hear murder, robbery, and so forth, spoken of in that calm, impartial manner."

"Then you do not admire him?" said Dora.

"Not admire him!—why, one of his volumes is never out of my pocket. I only la-

ment the dear, good-natured fellow is dead, and cannot write leaders in newspapers, or make speeches in senates. The great difference between him and us degenerate moderns, you see, is that, we have lost that beautiful candor of his. Yes, I fear *that* is gone," added Doctor Richard, in a tone of feeling regret; "but," he resumed, looking at Dora with a smile, "I preach in the desert. To tell you the truth, I would never have suggested that you should read 'The Prince.' It was your own desire which you followed, not my advice, you know."

"I hate Mr. Templemore," said Mrs. Luan, again; "he is a cheat, a swindler, a thief! Why are we beggars and is he rich?"

"Aunt!" remonstratively said Dora, very much annoyed at this second unseemly outbreak.

Doctor Richard smiled.

"That Templemore is a fool," he said; "he should, having injured Mrs. Luan, have taken some Macchiavel-like means to pacify her—either a handsome slice out of the inheritance, or if that should have been too expensive, a sedative, a cooling draught of some kind or other."

Now Mrs. Luan did not always understand irony, being a woman of slow literal mind, and all she now understood was that Doctor Richard recommended poisoning her. She could not speak, but her features worked, and her hands shook with anger. Perhaps he was aware of these signs; perhaps, too, he felt that he had commented too freely on a strictly private matter. At all events, he looked at his watch, and rose to go, like one who had let an appointed hour slip by.

"I shall not see you for a few days," he said, shaking hands with Mrs. Courtenay, "for I am going down to the country to-morrow; but I trust to find you still quite well when I return. If anything should ail you in my absence, let me advise you to call in Doctor Le Roux."

He handed her a card as he spoke. Mrs. Courtenay looked at it with childish curiosity.

"I suppose he takes care of your patients in your absence?" she suggested.

"He would do so," carelessly replied Doctor Richard, "if I had any patients to take care of; but, unluckily, that is not the case."

He spoke a little recklessly, as if the matter were one of profound indifference to him. Dora looked at him with involuntary compassion. He was more than thirty, and yet his career had done so little for him. It was a hard—a very hard case.

Doctor Richard turned to bid Mrs. Luan adieu, but Mrs. Luan, probably to avoid shaking hands with him, had left the room. Doctor Richard made no comment, and turned to Dora. She had taken a candle to light him down the dark staircase. Madame Bertrand was in bed, and, moreover, would not have left her comfortable fireside for any such task. Doctor Richard went down without saying a word, but paused at the foot of the staircase.

"Do you like flowers?" he asked, with his hand on the banisters.

"Yes, very much."

"Then you will allow me to bring you some from the country?" he said, quickly. "I might have known that you liked flowers," he added, without giving her time to reply; "but the doubt on my mind arose from the fact that I never see any with you."

Dora colored, then said, without false shame:

"Flowers—beautiful flowers especially—are expensive at this time of the year."

"Just so. Well, the gardener at the house to which I am going is a very good friend of mine, and he shall give me flowers—beautiful flowers, too, or I will have none of them."

Dora colored again, with pleasure this time, and she gave him a happy, grateful look. They shook hands, and he was gone.

CHAPTER XVII.

"I WONDER where he is going," thought Dora; "or where his rich patient lives?"

"My dear, how flushed you are!" said Mrs. Courtenay, as her daughter entered the sitting-room again, and put down the light with a pensive look. "Does your head ache?"

"Oh! no, I am only thinking how kind Doctor Richard is. He is going to bring me flowers—beautiful flowers from the country."

"He is the very kindest man!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, clasping her little plump white hands, "is he not, Mrs. Luan?"

Dora now perceived that her aunt had returned to the sitting-room. She saw too that Mrs. Luan looked herself again. Quite coolly she answered:

"I am sure Doctor Richard is married."

An earthquake could not have inflicted a more fearful shock upon Dora than did these words, nor one to which every fibre of her being was more terribly responsive. It seemed as if the floor shook beneath her feet—as if the room, with her mother and Mrs. Luan, went round and round before her swimming eyes. The revelation to herself of her secret hopes and wishes was both violent and cruel. One word she could not speak; but she sat down pale, breathless, full of terror, and covered with shame.

Mrs. Courtenay's consternation, though not equal to her daughter's in depth, was as great in extent.

"Married!" she said, in an injured tone, which showed she did not think Doctor Richard could be guilty of such a crime; "I do not believe it."

"And I am sure of it," retorted Mrs. Luan, with dark triumph at the sinner's iniquity. "What did he go to Italy for? Why did he not like to say he came from Kerry? Why does he never speak about himself? I am

sure he is married, and that he ill-uses his wife."

"And I am sure Doctor Richard would ill-use no one," quietly put in Dora. She had recovered by this, and though rather pale, was perfectly calm. "How late it is!" she added, as the old clock below struck the hour.

She left them still looking very quiet; but when she had entered her room, when she had closed and locked the door, and was free from intrusion, she flung herself on a chair near her bed, and burying her face in her pillow, she gave way to her humiliation and grief. She, Dora Courtenay, a girl of twenty-three, loved this stranger!—and he might be married! She had never thought of that—but had she thought of anything? She had known him a few weeks, and how could she dream of danger? And there was nothing to justify this terrible folly. He had been kind, he had been courteous, he had shown that he admired her, but no girl in her senses, and with the least experience of life, could say that he had betrayed any of the symptoms of love. A married man might behave to her exactly as Doctor Richard had behaved. Kindness, courtesy, and admiration are not prohibited to or from the wedded. It was all her folly, her own miserable folly. She told herself so again and again; but did it lessen the hardship of her fate that she alone was to blame for it? Alas! the more she looked into the past, the deeper was her sense of abasement. She knew nothing of Doctor Richard, literally nothing. Of his family, of his antecedents, of his fortunes, she was deeply ignorant. He might be an adventurer, one of life's outcasts, for all Dora Courtenay knew. That he was poor, and led rather a useless, idle sort of life, was certain. What had brought him to Rouen? Debts, perhaps—debts, or worse. Dora's heart sickened and revolted at the thought. No, she would believe nothing mean, nothing dishonorable of him. The open

manliness of his countenance gave her firm security against all degradation. That clear, frank look was the look of a man without fear or shame. But he might be married, and the thought was misery; he might have left his wife in Italy or in Ireland—nay, he might have gone to see her in the country. “But surely in that case he would say it,” thought Dora; “it would be neither honorable nor courteous to make a mystery of it. No, if he is married, his wife is not here. I dare say she is in Ireland.” Suddenly a picture rose before Dora Courtenay’s eye—a beautiful, heart-rending picture. She saw a bright hearth, a fair woman, with a child on her knee, and Doctor Richard smiling happily. She sat up, she clasped her hands tightly, she knit her brows and set her teeth. “I must bear it,” she thought; “I must. What right have I to quarrel with his domestic happiness? Let him be married or not married, what is it to me?”

But pride is a weak stay at the best. That spirit of defiance with which Dora uttered her “What is it to me?” soon died away, and left her desolate and weak. There is a well of strength, however, which she knew of old. To it she now turned, asking the Divine Master for a cup of those sweet waters which the Samaritan woman longed for. There were many pious memorials in Dora’s room—many signs of man’s weakness and God’s mercy—almost all were also tokens of her lost brother’s love; and as she now looked at them, each had its own language. That pathetic little image of the child Jesus sleeping on the cross Paul had bought from an Italian boy, and given her. That Saint Catherine borne by angels she had found hanging by her bedside on her sixteenth birthday; and that divine head crowned with thorns she had taken away from Paul’s room after his death. From the position of the picture, Dora had often thought that her brother’s last look had rested upon

that calm, sorrowful face—sorrowful for man’s sin, and not for the cost of redemption. The tears rushed to her eyes, and her lips quivered as sacrifice, suffering, death, and immortal love, all thus admonished and condemned her. She knelt and said her prayers, feeling both stricken and humbled by her folly, and asking for power to conquer, or for resignation to endure it, if endurance must indeed be her lot.

But though prayer is ever heard in heaven, we are not told that it is ever heard at once. A long sleepless night did Dora spend—long and cruel. She could not bear to go on loving this stranger, and she could not help it. This was her first love—the only love she was ever to know, and it had come to her, like Minerva from the brain of Jove, full grown and all-powerful. She tried to strive against it, but it seemed to her as if she only came out of the struggle weak, helpless, and beaten. A sickening sense of her powerlessness stole over her, then a vague, pitiful, yearning hope closed the long contest.

Never did Dora forget the bitter suspense of the next three days—three long, weary days of impatience and heart-sickening expectation. Madame Bertrand knew nothing—besides, Dora could put no plain questions, and her open, ingenuous nature revolted from indirect inquiry.

“Oh! if he were but back!” she thought—“that this wretched suspense might be over—that I might either be at peace with myself, or never see him again!”

At length the hope of relief came. On the morning of the third day Madame Bertrand came up with a nosegay of flowers so exquisite and so rare, that Dora remained mute as they were put in her trembling hands, and Mrs. Courtenay screamed with admiration, whilst even Mrs. Luan stared.

“They come from a conservatory,” thought Dora, as she bent her flushed face over them. He might be married, but she could not help

feeling happy at the gift. Yet she would not indulge herself. She was dressed to go out, and she went, and refused to linger and admire these rare and beautiful flowers. "I must not," she thought; and to her mother she said, "I must work, you know."

She went to her task, but her mind, no more than her heart, was in it. She longed for the evening. She felt sure he would look in, and that Mrs. Luan would question him, and then—a blank followed the thought.

"And then," thought Dora, after a while, "all will be over, and I shall be at rest. It is impossible that I cannot conquer this madness. I feel sure it is a sort of madness and no more. It is impossible that I should care—really care—for a man of whom I know nothing. I do not believe it—I will not! Besides, how can I, if he is married? But, then, suppose he is not?"

Her hand slackened in its labor, her pencil paused, then was still. Her heart beat, her pulses throbbed. If Doctor Richard was not married, might she not hope that he came to her mother's house for her sake? It was a natural hope and a natural conjecture. The young are allowed to indulge in such thoughts and such feelings. Later, they are forbidden, and none but the foolish can think and feel so. Indeed, it is part of the wisdom of age to put by and forget these fond badges of youth. They are things to be pinned on, and unpinned again, and left off early. The rosy favors of love are apt to fade, and the gay colors of pleasure have but a time. Truly it is lucky that the old are allowed to grow wise, to leave off their follies, and deny them gravely. It would be sad if Phillis should wear her shepherdess's hat and fluttering ribbons till threescore, and if Corydon should pipe to his sheep when the warm summer days have forever gone by.

But Dora's early spring was scarcely over, and her May was in all its sweet fervor. Love

to her was a hope, a mystery, and a delightful promise. A poor life, a life of toil, frightened her not, if this kind and true companion would but share it with her. She believed him honorable and good—what more was needed? For that is youth's glorious privilege. It is equal to any folly granted, but then it comes short of no heroism, no daring, no sacrifice. For this, we all love it, and in some sense we all honor it. We look at it as we might look at some noble tree full of the sap of life, its green boughs laden with flowers, and birds making sweet music beneath the leaves. We know, indeed, that they will be mute some day, for winter must come; we know that the leaves will turn yellow, and lie dead on the sodden earth; but all the sweeter for that knowledge are this fair tree's brief splendor and beauty.

Of that brevity youth is as happily unconscious as the tree in the forest. If its sacrifices are to be boundless, so are its loves to be immortal. It was not in Dora's power to foresee an end to her present feelings, and hence, perhaps, she surrendered herself to dangerous conjecture. But she could be wise too, for there is a wisdom which is not the fruit of experience, a wisdom which springs from the habit of self-subjection, and this soon came to the rescue. With a guilty start she banished the vision which turned the kind and courteous visitor into a fond lover. No modest girl who has had the misfortune to give her affection unsought, willingly, and in the first bitterness of the discovery, indulges in such fancies. Later they may come with hope, and be cherished, but surely not at first.

"I must work," thought Dora, resolutely; and she worked hard and conscientiously, till a step behind her made her cheeks burn. She knew well enough it was Doctor Richard, who was coming to look at her drawing. She turned round, trying to look calm, and she

thanked him for the flowers with tolerable composure.

"I shall bring you more next time," he said, smiling. Then he asked after Mrs. Courtenay.

"She is pretty well," replied Dora, quickly; "but I wish you would come in this evening and see her."

How she hated herself for saying that; but she could bear the suspense no longer. She knew that if he came Mrs. Luan would surely get the truth from him. Doctor Richard promised to look in readily enough, and he proceeded to talk to her of her drawing. He stayed long, advising, suggesting, and, do what she would, Dora felt happy.

The evening came, that evening which Dora longed for, and with it came Doctor Richard, pleasant and genial. Mrs. Luan glared at him, but, contrary to Dora's expectation, she was mute. Would she let him depart without putting the momentous question? But when, in answer to Dora's thanks, Doctor Richard said,

"I told the gardener's wife to choose such flowers—"

"Your wife!" interrupted Mrs. Luan, pretending to misunderstand him. "Is she in France, Doctor Richard?"

A deep silence followed this question. Dora's breath seemed gone, and she looked furtively at Doctor Richard. He colored, and a few seconds elapsed ere he replied.

"I have no wife, Mrs. Luan.—I am a widower," he added, gravely.

Mrs. Luan, who had looked triumphant for a moment, now looked blank, and Doctor Richard, turning to Dora, continued—

"Will you allow me to bring my little girl to see you, Miss Courtenay, I shall have her in Rouen for a day?"

Dora scarcely knew what she answered. She felt in heaven. She expected nothing, but Doctor Richard was not a married man.

She need feel no humiliation, no shame. Her reply seemed satisfactory, however, for he smiled, and looked satisfied; whilst Mrs. Courtenay, though rather offended that Doctor Richard did not want to bring his little girl to see her, asked how old the young lady was.

"Seven—but very delicate," he answered, with a sigh.

Dora felt full of pity, and questioned eagerly. Was she tall, dark, or fair, and did she speak French? And Doctor Richard, like most parents, answered readily. Dora thus learned that Eva was the child's name—that she was tall, dark, and spoke French fluently.

"And when will you bring her to us?" she asked.

He saw her eager eyes bent upon him; he read desire in her parted lips, and he smiled a kind, pleasant smile.

"After to-morrow, if you like it," he said.

"Doctor, what made you call her Eva?" inquired Mrs. Courtenay.

"It was her mother's name."

A cloud came over his face as he spoke, which looked more like the shadow of a past trouble than like the remembrance of a sorrow.

"I wonder if he was happy with his wife!" thought Dora;—"perhaps not, and perhaps, too, he does not mean to marry again."

The thought gave her no pain. To love is love's true happiness, and, in its early stage at least, it looks for none other. Delightful, therefore, was this evening to her. She spoke little, but she felt happy; and as she felt she looked, though she sat in silent reverie. She tried, indeed, to rouse herself, and at length she succeeded. When she came back from the world to which she had been wandering—the pleasant world of a girl's fancies—and was once more, both in body and in spirit, present in her mother's sitting-room, she found Mrs. Courtenay and Doctor Richard talking

gayly, and Mrs. Luan moody and sulky. Doctor Richard was a free man—nothing could atone for that calamity. Mrs. Courtenay looked at her sister-in-law, then winked significantly at Doctor Richard, adding, in broken words, which Mrs. Luan was supposed not to understand—

“Always was so—likes nothing—does not mind me now—does not know what I am talking of.”

Doctor Richard was of another opinion, and he succeeded in changing the discourse, which referred no more to Mrs. Luan till he left.

Almost from the first moment that he had mentioned the existence of his child, Dora had been full of a project, which she imparted to her mother as soon as he was gone, and Mrs. Luan had retired to her own room.

“Mamma,” she said rather eagerly, “Doctor Richard has been very kind to us. Suppose I dress a doll for Eva—the handsomest I can find?”

Mrs. Courtenay was charmed with the idea, and added confidentially—

“It is to *you* Doctor Richard wishes to bring his little girl. Dora, depend upon it he wants to marry you.”

Dora turned crimson, and denied this—but faintly.

“And I am sure of it,” said Mrs. Courtenay; “but perhaps you do not like him? Then, Dora, do not encourage him. He looks as if he would take such a matter to heart; better not give the child a doll, after all.”

Dora did not think that to give Eva a doll was to encourage Eva’s father in a hopeless passion; and she said so.

“And as my white silk dress would only get yellow and old-fashioned,” she added, “I shall cut it up.”

“Cut up your beautiful silk, Dora!”

“I shall never wear it again; and I do not like dyed silks. Besides, it is better to save money than buy.”

Mrs. Courtenay gave in, but with a sigh.

“I shall dress her like a bride,” resumed Dora, “with a veil and orange-wreath.”

Mrs. Courtenay screamed with delight.

“And she shall have a train ever so long, and satin shoes, and white kid gloves. She shall be the handsomest doll in Rouen. I shall go and buy it to-morrow morning; and, mamma, you will not tell aunt?”

“Of course not,” shrewdly said Mrs. Courtenay, who liked a conspiracy of all things.

When Dora retired to her own room, she took out the white silk dress, and looked at it. She had looked well in this dress, and she knew it. Were those days forever gone by? Was she never to go to a party again, but to spend life in its present obscurity? It really was a pity to cut it up; but then they could not afford to buy, and Doctor Richard had been so kind. There was no harm, however, in putting on this doomed robe once more, and seeing how she looked in it. So Dora slipped it on, and looked at herself in the glass, and bade a sort of farewell to life’s vanities as she saw her own image there. It is pleasant to look well—it is pleasant to wear silken garments, with their folds to rustle as we move—it is pleasant to be clad in the hue which suits our youth and its bloom, both, alas! so fleeting; but it is scarcely pleasant to do so when we feel that Pleasure has closed her gates upon us, and will open them no more.

“And yet why should there not be some wonderful story for me too?” thought Dora, sitting down to muse over her future; “why should dull commonplace be my lot? I do not feel as if the straight and beaten road were to be mine. I seem to see many winding paths before me. It may be an illusion, but it is a harmless one, and I will not bid it begone. As to the dress, I care not for it.”

She took it off, and to prevent the possibility of repentance, took two breadths out of the skirt. This sacrifice being accomplished, she

went to bed and dreamed of a marvellous doll with a train half a yard long. Early the next morning, Dora went out. She succeeded in finding such a doll as she wanted, and brought it home under her cloak, so that Mrs. Luan might not see it. She set about her task at once, and locked herself in to prevent a surprise; but Mrs. Courtenay, who, though she liked a conspiracy, did not seem to understand that secrecy was one of its most necessary ingredients, came and knocked for admittance every five minutes, "just to see how she was getting on." As Dora carefully locked the door after her mother every time she thus came, Mrs. Luan, had she been an observant person, could not have failed detecting the existence of a mystery. Luckily, few things, unless when connected in a very direct manner with her concerns, drew her attention, and all she thought, if she thought at all, was that Dora was engaged in some new drawing.

"What a pretty doll it is!" whispered Mrs. Courtenay, bending over the pillow on which the doll lay carefully wrapped in tissue paper; "and, oh! Dora, how it does stare!"

This Mrs. Courtenay announced as a decidedly singular fact, and as if the staring of dolls were a new discovery of hers.

"Yes," gayly said Dora; "it was shut up in a box, you see, and having just come out, it is making the best use of its eyes. Besides, it is fresh from Germany, and has a good deal to learn, poor thing! in this new country. Perhaps it is thinking of the Fatherland, and lamenting the change from the Rhine to the Seine."

"And, oh!" said Mrs. Courtenay, with her little scream, "you have got shoes for it!" and she took and twirled on her finger a pair of white satin bridal shoes, beautifully made.

"Yes," replied Dora, looking at them with a little envious sigh; "I knew I could not make them so well, so I bought them, and stockings and gloves. The rest I shall fashion myself."

And very cleverly did Dora set about her task. Her eye and her taste were both correct, and ere the day was half over the bride's attire was nearly completed.

"Is not Dora going out to-day?" asked Mrs. Luan, with some wonder.

Mrs. Courtenay winked several times very fast, pursed up her lips, and uttered a mysterious "No."

"What is she doing, then?"

"Nothing particular," replied Mrs. Courtenay, whose tone implied that Dora was doing something very particular indeed.

"Is she not well?"

"Dear me, Mrs. Luan, how many questions you do put! Cannot the child stay within without your knowing why?"

Now, if Mrs. Luan's inquisitiveness had not been stimulated after this, she should have had no such organ. But as she did possess some share of this important faculty, she determined to know what Dora was doing. Very craftily, however, did she set about her purpose. When Mrs. Courtenay left the room, Mrs. Luan went and knocked at Dora's door, and Dora, thinking it was her mother, opened with a chiding smile.

"Is not your mother here?" asked Mrs. Luan.

"No, aunt," replied Dora, blushing with vexation.

No change, no emotion, appeared on Mrs. Luan's heavy face as she withdrew; but she had seen the doll standing with her back to a chair, her white dress on, and the orange-wreath and veil on the table; and she was not quite so dull but that she knew what this meant. Mrs. Luan had a spice of vindictiveness in her composition. She felt aggrieved at Dora's daring act, and still more aggrieved at having been excluded from all knowledge of it. She resolved to be revenged, and watched her opportunity so well, that when Dora left her room after dinner, Mrs. Luan

stole into it unsuspected. But in vain she looked on the bed, on the furniture—the doll was not there; in vain she tried the drawers, Dora had locked them and taken the key. Mrs. Luan's homicidal intentions against Eva's doll were defeated, and she crept out of the room unseen indeed, but none the less sulky at having been baffled.

Doctor Richard came in the evening. He had not intended doing so, but he had been to the Gallery, and not seeing Dora there, he concluded that either she or her mother was unwell. He now called to ascertain the correctness of his suspicions.

Dora smiled demurely at his surprise, and replied gayly,

"No, I could not go to-day."

Mrs. Courtenay pursed up her lips not to laugh, and said, with a mysterious and puzzled assumption of clearness,

"No, Dora could not go to-day."

"Dora was dressing a doll," put in Mrs. Luan, who would not be quite balked of her revenge. "A doll for your little girl, Doctor Richard."

Doctor Richard smiled, looked surprised as well as pleased, and said, "Indeed!" whilst Dora uttered a remonstrative, "Oh, aunt!" and tried not to seem too much annoyed. Mrs. Courtenay did not attempt to conceal her indignation.

"Of all talkative creatures, Mrs. Luan," she said, austere, "you are the most indiscreet. You might know Dora wanted to surprise her young friend."

Mrs. Luan resorted to her usual defence, and began to buzz.

"I don't know anything about that," she said. "The doll was dressed like a bride, which did not look like a secret. At least, I know that when my aunt ran away with Sir John Barry she went in a cotton dress, in order to be taken for the cook. Though how she could be taken for the cook, who was stout, and forty-five, I don't know."

"There!—there!" superciliously replied Mrs. Courtenay, "who ever heard the like? Do you suppose we mean to say the doll was going to contract a private marriage, or to run away with any one, when the orange-wreath and the veil tell as plainly as can be that she is going off to church?"

"My dear Miss Courtenay," said Doctor Richard, pathetically, "do let me have a peep at the bride. I shall be miserable if I do not see her, and you may be sure I shall not say a word about it to Eva!"

Dora, nothing loath, rose, and went and brought out "the Mariée." She placed her standing safely against the wall, and having set her off by putting a sheet of blue paper behind her back, she withdrew several steps, and looked rather anxiously at Doctor Richard's dark face. This doll was a very pretty one—she had blue eyes, pink cheeks, and red lips. Somewhat deficient in figure she had been, but, thanks to Dora's unscrupulous skill, she had now the most delicate round waist. These "natural" advantages were set off by the loveliest bridal dress maiden ever wore on her marriage morn. Her robe of long sweeping white silk, looped up in front to show a pair of fairy white feet, was exquisitely trimmed with tulle bouillonné, as an article on the fashions would have said. A long veil, through which shone her fair hair, flowed around her. The orange-wreath nodded over her snowy brow; pearls gleamed on her plump white neck, and were twisted in rows around her fair arms. Doctor Richard frowned.

"Miss Courtenay," he asked, "does a bride wear jewels?"

"I believe pearls are allowed," timidly said Dora. "Besides," she pleaded, "they are sure to please the child."

"Pearls, and no prayer-book!" he continued, critically.

But Dora shut his mouth. She produced a combination of white satin and gilt paper,

which, when completed, was to be placed in the hand of the bride, and to be considered a prayer-book. Doctor Richard smiled, and made no further objection.

"Dear Miss Courtenay," he said, evidently much gratified, "I cannot tell you how grateful I feel for all the trouble you have taken, and if Eva does not go crazy with joy, I know nothing about her!"

"I hope she will like it," remarked Dora, with a smile. "I have done my best."

"You have done wonders—and the doll is a beautiful doll! Indeed, I feel bound to wish her bridegroom joy, whoever he may be. This Minna or Thecla—for who can doubt her parentage?—will surely make a good wife! There is truth in her honest blue eye, and good-humor in her round, rosy face. She has a good intellectual development too. In short, I see a store of domestic bliss for the happy man!"

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, "to think you should see it all in the doll's face, Doctor Richard! I only saw that she stares."

"She does stare a lee-ttle—just a leetle bit," deprecatingly observed Doctor Richard. "In her maiden innocence, you see, she looks at this wicked world, and thinking no harm of it, forgets to drop her eyelids. Besides, this bit of insolence shows her high birth and perfect breeding. Then how do we know but that she is a specimen of the fast young lady! These rosy lips may talk slang for all I can tell to the contrary; but oh! if she does talk slang, let it be German slang, I pray, and not English slang, wherewith she might corrupt my little Eva's vernacular."

"She shall not talk at all, Doctor Richard," gayly exclaimed Dora. "I am a fairy, and I lay upon her the spell of silence."

"An Irish Geis, such as used to be laid on our kings and heroes," said Doctor Richard, rising. "Dear Miss Courtenay, your bride is perfect now; for as she can never say the fatal

'yes,' so can she never cease to be a bride. Life to her will be a perpetual marriage morning, with orange-wreath ever in bloom. Time is no more for her. Youth and beauty cannot fade. Truly you are a fairy indeed!"

"What, going so soon?" cried Mrs. Courtenay, as she saw him looking for his hat.

"Yes, I have an appointment. But I shall bring you Eva to-morrow."

"Bring her to luncheon," warmly said Mrs. Courtenay.

Doctor Richard seemed to hesitate.

"With great pleasure," he said, after the pause of a moment; "but though I by no means presume to make the favor I am going to ask a condition of my little Eva's coming to-morrow, I hope you will grant it. I have long promised Eva that she and I should have luncheon together on the grass before the weather got too cool. Will you join us? The spot is pretty, and within five minutes of Rouen by rail."

Mrs. Courtenay and her daughter were taken by surprise. They exchanged looks, then Mrs. Courtenay spoke and accepted.

"You see, my dear," she said to Dora after Doctor Richard had left them, "it would really have been unkind to refuse Doctor Richard; he would have thought we were afraid of putting him to some expense, and that would have annoyed and humbled him."

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEAUTIFUL and bright shone the next morning when Dora opened her window and looked out. A warm sunbeam stealing over the roof of their low house lit the opposite church; the vine-leaves reddened in its glow, the air was crisp and sharp, and every thing to Dora looked enchanting.

"We must give Doctor Richard and his little girl a good luncheon," said Mrs. Cour-

tenay, who partook of her daughter's exhilaration; "a pair of roast fowls, and a tart. The little thing is sure to like the pastry."

"And so is the father," suggested Mrs. Luan, grimly; "he eats our bread and butter as if he were starving."

"Nonsense, Mrs. Luan," shortly replied Mrs. Courtenay; "how can Doctor Richard be starving when he has that large house to himself?"

"I dare say he pays no rent," said Mrs. Luan, after a pause; "they have put him in to keep it aired."

"They!—who?—what they?"

But to answer this question was beyond Mrs. Luan. She replied, impatiently, that she did not know their name; and Mrs. Courtenay had too much to do to spend more time in the argument. A terrible deal of fuss and worry had to be gone through before the luncheon could be got ready for one o'clock, the appointed hour.

Mrs. Courtenay joined Madame Bertrand in the kitchen, and a little squabbling, polite, of course, but decidedly squabbling, was the consequence of her appearance there. Dora, too, had her share of preparation, though Mrs. Courtenay would not hear of her venturing on anything culinary, lest she should soil her clothes or spoil her hands; and Mrs. Luan alone sat idle, and in high dudgeon. Most cordially did she hate these doings, and Doctor Richard and Eva, and the expense and the doll. But she was mute. She knew she had no right to speak, and that her objection, if she made any, would not be regarded. So she was silent, and looked on—brooding over her wrongs, and thinking them many.

And now the hour came round, and both Dora and Mrs. Courtenay began to look anxiously at the clock. At a quarter to one steps were heard coming up the staircase, and a childish voice mingled with deeper tones. Dora went and opened the door, and received

her young guest with a smile and a kiss. Eva had her father's dark eyes and his genial smile, but otherwise she was not much like him. She gave Dora a shy, wistful look, then she returned her embrace, and was familiar and free in a moment.

"You live here?" she said, running to the window and peeping out. "Oh! what a queer old church! Do you like it? Are these your birds?"

She looked curiously at Dora's sparrows, who fed tamely on the ledge of the open window, looking sharply at Eva, however, with their little keen black eyes, then suddenly flew away twittering.

"Miss Courtenay prevails over every thing," said Doctor Richard; "birds and children."

"Come to my room," whispered Dora. "I have a young lady there who is waiting for you."

"For me?" said Eva, looking interested.

Dora nodded, and, taking her hand, led her away. They entered her room, and she there probably introduced Miss Eva to the bride, for Doctor Richard smiled as he heard a succession of rapturous screams from within. Presently Eva came out with the doll in her arms, and ran to her father, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks flushed with joy.

"Oh! do look!" she entreated; "do!"

Doctor Richard pretended to be greatly pleased and surprised, and every thing would have gone on charmingly, if Mrs. Luan had not uttered a croaking note:

"That doll will not live—it is consumptive!"

"Dolls do not die," pertainly said Miss Eva; "they get broken, though."

She laughed, but no one else laughed. Doctor Richard's eye had an angry flash as it lighted on Mrs. Luan, and Dora and her mother looked shocked and distressed, for the glow of health was wanting to Eva's dark cheek, and now and then a hectic flush appeared there in its stead. She was a sickly

child, too, and ate little. The chickens, though done to a turn, did not tempt her; the tart she would not touch. "Ah! there is sorrow in store for him there, and he knows it," thought Dora; but conscious of future grief though he might be, Doctor Richard did not intrude his apprehension upon his friends. He was as gay and cheerful as he could well be, uttered some pretty nonsense about the bride, and indulged himself in some of those flights of speech which, if they entertained Dora, always saddened her, as showing how little share the practical had in his life. Mrs. Courtenay seemed struck with this fact too, and she remarked in her innocence:

"Doctor Richard, what a pity you do not do something! Write books, I mean," she added, a little confused at the uncalled-for advice; "I am sure you could write—oh! so well."

"Papa does write," put in Eva, rather jealously; "he wrote me out 'Cinderella,' and illustrated it, with her glass slipper and all."

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Courtenay; "are you really an author, Doctor Richard?"

"I am afraid having written out 'Cinderella' will scarcely give me a claim to authorship, Mrs. Courtenay," he replied, smiling.

"Oh! but one can put a great deal of originality even into an old fairy-tale," kindly said Mrs. Courtenay; "I am sure," she added emphatically, "your version of 'Cinderella' is charming. Is it published?"

"I have taken some liberties with it," gravely replied Dr. Richard; "and therefore I dare not face the juvenile public, which is apt to be cruel at times. For instance, I have called 'Cinderella' 'Rhodopis.' You are not aware, perhaps, that Cinderella's prince was one of the Pharaohs, and that she now sleeps as a mummy beneath one of the Pyramids. Now, how would the little men and the little women like that? Not at all, I dare say, for, you see, Eva persists in calling poor Rhodopis Cinderella, and her sandal a glass slipper."

Mrs. Courtenay tried to look both knowing and captivated, and was sure that the story of Rhodopis, *alias* Cinderella, was mightily interesting, and she reiterated her wish that Doctor Richard would become an author. "I assure you you would be successful," she added, with much simplicity.

Doctor Richard seemed amused.

"I might, as you kindly predict, be successful," he replied, "but then I should no longer be Doctor Richard, which is, I confess it, the character I prefer. If you were to know, my dear madam, how many a fine fellow has been spoiled, to my knowledge, by some such hobby! I like to keep my identity, and feel as sure as human frailty will let me, that I shall remain what I am. Change is so dangerous. History and daily life are both full of perplexing questions bearing on this matter. Take Robespierre, for instance, and put him on horseback, and perhaps the man is a hero. Take Napoleon, and make a disappointed lawyer of him, and he sends all his friends to the scaffold, as he sent boyish conscripts to death, and follows them there, instead of dying like a chained eagle in Saint Helena. Nay, even a trifle—if there be such things as trifles, which I doubt—can change the aspect of a country and the character of a people. There was a time when it was a capital offence to burn coals in London. Fancy London without smoke or soot, and just tell me if the Londoners must not have been then a different people from what they are now."

"Good gracious!" cried Mrs. Courtenay—"London without coals!"

"Dreadful! is it not?"

"And fame, Doctor Richard," said Dora, rather earnestly—"do you not care for that?"

"Fame for writing about Rhodopis," he good-humoredly replied.

"There are other subjects," she urged.

"So there are—'Red-riding Hood,' 'Beauty

and the Beast, and others; and to tell you the truth, I have written about them too. A set of gypsies! There is no knowing where they came from. They are here, they are there, in every point of the compass do we find these pretty Zingari. A world of trouble they gave me."

"And so you do not care about fame?" resumed Dora, who would not be balked of an answer.

"Verily, Miss Courtenay, I do not. I admire the man who first said, 'What has posterity done for me, that I should do anything for posterity?' Think, moreover, how fragile a good it is! Think of poor Ptolemy and his eleven ethereal regions. For a thousand years and more he reigns supreme in astronomy, then comes a Copernik, or a Galileo, and Ptolemy may sleep in Egyptian dust for evermore."

"Ah! if one could rouse him out of that apathy to generous ambition!" thought Dora, with a secret sigh.

But of that there seemed little chance. Doctor Richard looked too good-humored, and too well-satisfied with his poverty to be easily roused. But however deficient these genial natures may be, they have a charm which is irresistible. When Doctor Richard, noticing how languid Eva began to look, spoke of going, it seemed to Dora that his three hours' stay had been too brief, and she longed to join her entreaties to Eva's prayer to be allowed to remain. But she did not—perhaps she dared not. Doctor Richard looked, moreover, as if he would have been inexorable, so Eva submitted, threw her arms around Dora's neck, and said, kindly,

"Do come and see me—do!"

"Miss Courtenay has no more time to lose, Eva," said her father. "She lost yesterday in dressing your doll, and to-day in receiving you; it is out of the question that she should sacrifice a third day."

Eva looked rather crestfallen, but Dora whispered:

"Never mind; you will come and see me again," and the brightness returned to the child's face, and with a look of intelligence she nodded, adding in Dora's ear, "I love you, Miss Courtenay. Oh! I do love you so!"

A fond parting followed, and Dora went to the window and looked out, and saw Doctor Richard and his little girl walking down the street. Ere they turned the corner, Eva looked up at her, and gave her a last friendly nod.

When Dora drew her head away, and looked in, she found her aunt in a towering passion. Whenever Mrs. Luan was angry, speech failed her utterly. She stammered through her wrath, and became almost incomprehensible. Dora looked at her flushed and agitated face, then glanced to her mother for explanation.

"Your aunt is angry with poor Doctor Richard," said Mrs. Courtenay.

"A low, vulgar upstart!" stammered Mrs. Luan—"how dare he?—how dare he?"

"Why, what has Doctor Richard done?" asked Dora, with a little indignation.

"No doctor!" said Mrs. Luan—"not he. I know a doctor."

"Aunt, what is the matter?"

"Don't tease her," whispered her mother. "She is in a rage because she considers that Doctor Richard has retracted his invitation."

"Oh! aunt," remonstrated Dora, "is it possible you do not see that Doctor Richard spoke so to surprise Eva to-morrow? He looked at me quite significantly all the time."

This did not mend matters.

"Why does he look the beggar?"

Poor Mrs. Luan! she was nearly a beggar herself, yet in her wrath she could find no keener word of reproach for the offender than this. Dora blushed a little, but was mute.

"Why does he come here?" angrily continued Mrs. Luan. "He is old, he is poor!—you can't want him!"

Dora became crimson. "Aunt—" she began, but Mrs. Courtenay interrupted her a little angrily.

"Nonsense," she said, "Dora wants no one; but I must say that even if Doctor Richard comes here for her sake—which I do believe—Dora could not do better than to receive his addresses. He is a most delightful man," she added, emphatically; "and I should like to see my dear Dora provided for before I die."

Now, the idea of Dora being provided for by "the beggar," as she called him, added fuel to the fire of Mrs. Luan's wrath, and there is no knowing to what a height it might have risen if Madame Bertrand had not just then made her appearance with a note, which she handed to Dora. It was from Doctor Richard, and reminded her of her promise to meet Eva the next day. He also intimated that, "in case they did not find ten too early, the carriage of the lady with whom Eva resided, and which had been placed at his disposal, would come round for Mrs. and Miss Courtenay and Mrs. Luan, at that hour."

Dora's bright face took a flush of pleasure and triumph as she read this note aloud, and it was with the mildest reproach that she said,

"There, aunt!"

Mrs. Luan was silent and sulky, and Mrs. Courtenay full of childish glee.

"A carriage!" she said. "Then I suppose the lady is quite rich. I should not wonder if she had really adopted little Eva. Poor darling! It is an injudicious plan, I think. How will she like poverty when she has to go back to it? Parents should think of these things."

She shook her head, and breathed a philosophy sigh over Doctor Richard's imprudence.

Dora folded up her note, and went into her room to read it again.

There is a rapid downward path in all things, and Dora Courtenay was going down very fast to the dangerous depths whence it is all but hopeless to look up to the free level world again. She knew it, and yet she went on and never cared to stop or to look back. Doctor Richard was free, that was enough for conscience. He was free, and though it might be a misfortune to love him, it could no longer be a sin. Foolish girl, as if a misfortune to which our will says "yes" were not almost always guilt more or less deep, but guilt none the less. Her aunt's jealous observation of Doctor Richard, her mother's fond comments on his frequent visits, were as music to her ear, siren music, wondrous and strange, that made her reckless of the breakers and sand-banks to which her poor bark was rapidly steering. Oh! if it were true! If he really liked her! If he came to the house for her! If he had brought his child because he wished her to become that child's mother! If he hoped to bind her to himself by the closest and the dearest ties known to man! She was alone now, yet at the thought she hid her flushed face in both her hands. She was so happy that she could scarcely bear it. It did occur to her, indeed, that she might be mistaken—that Doctor Richard had no such intentions as her mother and her own secret hopes attributed to him. But even if he had not these wishes now, might they not come with time? Few women who have the power to fascinate do not know that it is theirs. Dora Courtenay had charmed many hearts in her day. She knew she had the gift to attract even those for whom she cared little; was it presumption to think that she might win a heart so dear?—was it wrong to try and do so?

"I will be good!" thought Dora. "I will try and conquer my faults. If I reach his liking it shall be through his esteem, and then I

can at least look back on the attempt without self-reproach or shame. Perhaps he is too poor to marry. Perhaps, seeing aunt and mamma almost dependent upon me, and having a child himself, he will not be so imprudent. If so, I cannot blame him, surely. And yet people can be poor and very happy ! ”

As Dora came to this conclusion, she could not help looking toward the lame teacher's window. It was open, to let in the pleasant autumn heat ; and Dora's eye could dive down into the clear dark room, dark not because it was gloomy, but on account of the surrounding brightness of the street. It was very neat, though poorly furnished ; the beeswaxed floor shone again, the distant bed looked snow-white, and the lame teacher's wife sat mending linen with a work-basket on a chair by her. Presently she put down her task to peep out of the window. She gave a long, wistful look down the street, then she glanced toward a little clock on the mantle-piece. Was her husband late?—was she getting anxious at his delay ? But there was no need—a door opened, and Dora saw him coming in. He went up to his wife and kissed her. She took away his hat and books, made him sit down in her chair, and brought him a glass of wine.

“ Yes, one can be poor and be happy,” thought Dora, turning away from the little homely picture, “ but I could be happy also even though I should never marry him, or though we did not marry till we were both as old as that poor teacher and his wife. I could wait twenty years for him and think it but a day. It would be strange indeed to marry at past forty, and yet I know I could be happy still—very happy. His hair would be quite gray, and mine would be turning fast. I should be rather a faded old maid, such a one as people say of, ‘ She must have been good-looking when she was twenty.’ He would be brown and rather thin, and Eva would be a young matron with children on her knees—but I

should be happy, very happy. We should have a little money then—not much, but just a little ; a cottage near Dublin, too ; and he would be out all day, and would come home to me of an evening a little tired, but cheerful. ‘ Dora,’ he would say, as we sat and talked by the fire, ‘ do you remember when you were young ? You had bright hair and brighter eyes, and a blooming face enough then, and now they are gone.’ I shall answer, ‘ You should have come earlier, sir, and you should have had them all.’ Ah ! what will he say to that ? ”

Poor Dora ! Her dream from subjective and contingent has become future, so swift is the transition. She stands in her room with Doctor Richard's note in her hand, and happening to raise her eyes, she sees her own image in the greenish glass above her mantel-piece. It is a dull plate, tarnished and gloomy, but Dora's radiant face shines from its depths with the glorious light of hope and young love. And Dora is not forty yet, but twenty-three, and she barely looks beyond her teens. There is not a silver thread in the rich brown gold of her hair, nothing has yet dimmed the brightness of her happy, radiant eyes. With that pure, fresh bloom on her cheek, and that smile of delight on her ripe lips, Dora looks enchanting just then. Mere beauty would seem cold near her, for beauty is not always a light from within ; and the fervor of her dream, and the consciousness that she is still young and pleasant to look at, make Dora's heart beat with secret rapture. She knows, too—how can she help knowing it ?—that she has more to give than to receive in the exchange she is contemplating. How many women would care for the poor widower of thirty-odd ?—and how many men could help caring for the young radiant girl ?

“ He is worth ten of me,” thought Dora, turning away from the glass ; “ but most girls would remember his half-shabby coat, and

laugh at him if he came to woo. Perhaps he knows it, and is diffident. Ah! if he knew all—if he but knew it!”

But on reflection Dora thought it was as well that he should not know it. She opened a drawer, took out a little inlaid mother-of-pearl casket, in which she kept her choicest treasures—memorials of her brother—and she put Doctor Richard’s note with them.

“Paul would have liked him,” she thought, the tears rushing to her eyes. “Oh! if I could but have seen these two together—if I could but have sat and listened to them, how happy, how very happy I should have been!”

But sad and troubled are the dreams we indulge in when we remember the dead. We cannot, if we have truly loved them, let fancy free where they are concerned. The gloom, the sad austerity of the grave, its silence and its hopelessness, ever come between us and our reverie. The remembrance of her brother, ever loved, ever lamented, fell like a pall over Dora’s happy imagining.

“I must not think of these things,” she thought, rather sadly; “if Doctor Richard wished to marry he need not have waited so long to do so; and if he does not care for me, why should I be ever thinking of him?”

But she left his note where she had put it with the treasures and the mementoes of her youth.

CHAPTER XIX.

At ten exactly a handsome carriage drew up before Madame Bertrand’s door, and Madame Bertrand herself came up with the tidings, looking both charmed and puzzled as she delivered them.

“Such a pretty carriage,” she said; “such handsome horses, too!”

Mrs. Courtenay smiled mysteriously; and Dora went to the glass, tied her bonnet-strings, and, without looking round, said:

“Are you ready, aunt?”

Twenty times since the morning Mrs. Luan had declared that she would not go, and twenty times she had retracted and said she would. As her last declaration had been one of denial, her present one was naturally one of assent. Rather shortly she answered that she was quite ready. They went down at once and entered the carriage; whilst Madame Bertrand stood on the doorstep to see them drive away.

The morning was one of perfect beauty. Mrs. Courtenay’s raptures were spoken; but though Dora was mute, never, it seemed to her, had earth and sky been so full of happy promises as they were then. Through the city they went; beyond the track of the railways, through a green and fertile landscape, up a winding road that overlooked the silver Seine, till they came at length to a little wood, on the skirt of which they saw Doctor Richard and Eva waiting for them.

“I have called her Minna!” cried Eva, darting forward to meet Dora as she alighted.

“And I have already broken her nose,” added Doctor Richard, completing the information.

“Why did she fall?” argued Eva, looking injured.

“Oh! Doctor Richard, what a charming place!” cried Mrs. Courtenay, looking round; “and we have a carpet too,” she added, seeing one spread on the grass within the shade of the trees.

“And partridges in the hamper!” said Eva; “and—”

“Eva!” Doctor Richard said no more; but Eva was mute and looked abashed.

The spot was pretty, sylvan and quiet. A stone cross rose at the angle of the wood; close by it a little stream murmured through the grass; below lay a wide and rich landscape, and the winding road up which they had come passed through the wood and be-

came an arched avenue. Dora watched the carriage, which, after bringing them thus far, now entered that shady path, and was soon hidden from her view, and she wondered whither it was going. Doctor Richard, who was reading her face very closely, was soon by her side.

"Do you like this spot?" he asked.

"How could I fail liking it?" she replied, smiling; "it is charming!"

"Yes; and I brought Fido," said Eva, who could not bear to be silent. "Oh! do look at him, Miss Courtenay!"

A pretty King Charles, who lay licking his paws on the carpet, now interrupted the task in order to look at the new-comers. On Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan he bestowed a lazy, good-natured look; but Dora he eyed more shrewdly. After a few seconds given to deliberation, he rose, came up to her, sniffed her flowing skirts, then pawed her with a familiarity that looked like recognition. Dora stooped and patted his silky head, whilst Doctor Richard smiled significantly.

"Fido is a shy, reserved dog," he said; "and yet, you see, Miss Courtenay, he acknowledges your power at once."

"Oh! but they all like Dora!" cried Mrs. Courtenay; "Madame Bertrand's cat dotes on her; and it is a most intelligent cat, and never could endure Monsieur Theodore, who ran away without paying the poor old thing!"

"What a remarkable cat!" gravely said Doctor Richard. "I hope it clawed Monsieur Theodore and spit at him."

"Yes, it did," innocently replied Mrs. Courtenay; adding, whilst Mrs. Luan looked daggers at her, "but it loves Dora so."

Doctor Richard did not answer that everything and every one must love Dora, but his look and smile implied it so plainly, that Dora thought with secret joy, "Well, I believe it is so—I do believe that everything and almost everyone likes me!"

"Come and look at yourself in the water!" cried Eva, impatiently; and taking hold of her hand, she led Dora away.

The little stream flowed slowly, and proved a fair mirror. It gave back the gray old cross, all mossy with age, and a quivering aspen-tree, and Dora's laughing face as she bent over it; and it soon gave back Doctor Richard's face, too, for Dora remembered later that he kept very close to her that morning. But a sudden breeze rippled the water, and every image within it was broken.

"A pretty looking-glass, forsooth!" said Doctor Richard—"is it an image of life, Miss Courtenay?"

"I hope not," she replied quickly.

"You prefer a smooth, unruffled surface?—so do I; but who has it? So let us make the best of the present time."

"It is time for luncheon," said Eva.

"Well, I believe it is, you little torment!"

Mrs. Luan and her sister-in-law were already seated on the carpet. Dora and Eva joined them—Minna was by Eva's side, and Fido nestled on Dora's skirts—and Doctor Richard unpacked the hamper, and laid the cloth. Alas! how extravagant that Doctor Richard was! This was not a sumptuous repast, indeed, but it was far too luxurious for a man in his circumstances. Dora did not dare to say a word, but Mrs. Courtenay assumed the privilege of her years, and lectured this prodigal entertainer. He heard her with his usual good-humor, but attempted no justification.

"Life is brief," was all he said; "let us enjoy its happy hours whilst we may, Mrs. Courtenay. This delightful morning required cold partridges, a melon, champagne, and a few et-ceteras. I contend that we could not enjoy the landscape upon less."

Mrs. Courtenay tried to find an answer to this argument, but failed. Doctor Richard's geniality was communicative this morning.

Even Mrs. Luan, perhaps under the influence of such unwonted good cheer, relaxed from the usual severity of her demeanor. Dora did not care to hide her happiness. When the meal was over, she went with Eva to sit by the stream, and she there enjoyed herself silently. The sweet autumn breath from the little wood filled her with a vague delight. There was music in the soft rustling of the trees, and to sit thus, forgetting the world, and looking at the dark though clear water rippling along, and seeming to carry away in its waves the woodland green and the blue sky, was enchanting. This little bit of Norman landscape was Eden to her, and everything in her aspect said so. Doctor Richard looked at her even while he talked with Mrs. Courtenay, and as he looked he thought :

"If ever a girl was made for happiness, this is she. Happiness is her calling, her vocation, just as ill-temper is her precious aunt's."

Unconscious of this severe sentence, Mrs. Luan, who could enjoy the good things of this world when she had not to pay for them, was wondering whether she had really done justice to Doctor Richard's luxurious cheer, when a fit of drowsiness that came upon her seemed to answer the question satisfactorily. Doctor Richard, who saw her struggling against sleep, smiled and walked away to smoke a cigar, whilst Dora rose and went away with Eva to wander in the wood.

"I shall stay and mind Mrs. Luan," whispered Mrs. Courtenay to her daughter. "I do believe she is overpowered with the champagne; you know how I was for just one glass of cider."

Dora laughed, but willingly enough left Mrs. Luan to her mother's care, and walked away, as we said, with Eva, leisurely followed by Fido. They went along a narrow winding path, where the shade was thick, and where a sunbeam could scarcely pierce the heavy

boughs. Many yellow and withered leaves already strewed the grass, and crackled under their feet; but the air was warm, and a gentle breeze scarcely moved Dora's muslin dress. She felt vaguely happy, and holding the child's hand, hearing her chattering without listening to it, she felt as if she could walk on thus nor think of stopping, when she suddenly stood still on seeing Doctor Richard. He was leaning against a tree smoking, and throwing away his cigar, he came toward them.

"Eva," he said, without preamble, "go and put on your hat."

"There is no sun."

"Do as I bid you."

Eva pouted, but obeyed. Dora and Doctor Richard remained alone. Dora felt tongue-tied; sudden shyness came over her, and kept her mute. Doctor Richard did not appear to see her embarrassment. He only smiled as he saw Fido standing in the path looking after Eva, but remaining after evident consideration of the matter, with Dora.

"Fido has decidedly given you his heart!" he said.

"Does he not stay with you, Doctor Richard?"

"No. I have the slightest share of Fido's regard. Yet he owes me much. A poor English lady died here, and this little fellow was her great trouble during her last illness, for, as she said to me, 'No one will have him for his own sake, he is too old, and no one here can value him for mine.' I set her mind at rest by promising to take him; so when the poor thing died, I put Fido in my pocket and brought him to Eva. But there was grief and trouble in Fido's little heart, and he never could take kindly to us. He lies on his cushion licking his paws, and sometimes seeming to wait and listen for a footstep that comes not, and will never come again; and he lives a good deal within himself, like a philosopher. Poor old Fido! There is some

thing pathetic to me in the old age of animals. We are still in all the early exuberance of our youth when decrepitude steals upon them. But all this Eva does not suspect, and she petulantly wonders that Fido will not play with her, and murmurs because he walks instead of running along the avenues."

"What avenues?" thought Dora.

"How do you like this little wood?" suddenly asked Doctor Richard, changing the subject rather abruptly.

"Very much indeed!"

"Yes, it is pretty enough; but you and I, Miss Courtenay, have seen spots more beautiful by far in another land than this!"

"You mean in Ireland?" replied Dora.

"I do. We had not there indeed that clear brightness, the attribute of the Continent; but there is a western softness which has its charm, sometimes mysterious and sweet, like what we imagine of fairy-land. If there be a country in the landscape of which poetry has chosen to become visible, it is surely Ireland. In other lands—I speak of the most favored—climate, ruins, and famous old names lend their beauty to spots which otherwise might not be much heeded; but in Ireland it is not so. There the spell is unalloyed. We need no heathen temple to grace the waterfall. We do not ask what poet's villa once stood by the lake—what battle was fought on its banks. We have a sad story which we would rather forget than remember, so we look at this beautiful Ireland, and think her a free virgin still, for though many have been her masters, she has preserved the grace and wildness of liberty through all the bitterness of her servitude."

He spoke with some emotion, and tears rushed to Dora's eyes as she heard him. A vision of the past—not of her lost home, but of Deenah as she imagined it, with its shining lake, its white waterfall, and its sweet sylvan landscape—rose before her as he spoke.

"I have pained you," he said.

"Yes," she answered, "for your words made me think of places which I shall never see."

"Oh! how can you tell?"

"I do not wish it," she very sadly said.

"Oh! but I do," he ejaculated, with sudden fervor. "God forbid that I should stay forever in this pretty Normandy—so pretty, but so homely!"

"He does not mean to stay in Rouen," thought Dora, with a pang. "I might have known it. What brought him here?"

Doctor Richard unconsciously answered that question by saying:

"I came for Eva's health. She required this keen air—for a time, at least. This is a very elevated spot."

They had reached a narrow platform beyond the wood. On their left stood a little brick château, of gay and cheerful aspect. Its high slate roof and tall chimney-stacks were cut sharply in the blue air. Its many windows were framed by white stone carvings. Behind it spread a green mass of trees, with many an autumn tint softening their verdure. In front a blooming flower-garden sloped from the flight of stone steps that led to the porch down to the handsome iron gates that closed the entrance to the pleasant domain.

The flowers, stirred by a soft breeze, were dancing in the sun, the window-panes shone again in its western glow; the whole place looked so gay, so airy, so cheerful, that a smile broke over Dora's face as she went up to the gates, and stood still to look at it through the iron bars.

"Oh! what a place to live in!" she exclaimed. "What sunny rooms those must be within it, rooms in which it is delightful to sit and read by the open window, and alternate every page with a look!"

"Say but sesame, and the gates shall open, and the whole place bid you welcome," gayly exclaimed Doctor Richard.

Dora turned round with a startled look.

"It is mine," he said, quietly.

"Yours!"

"Mine, at least, on a long lease."

Dora's blooming face grew ashy pale, and her hand grasped one of the bars of the iron gate with unconscious force. Who?—what was Doctor Richard? He answered the question she was unable to put, and said, gravely:

"My name is Templemore—Doctor Richard Templemore."

If he had led her mind back to Ireland, that this revelation might prove less startling, Mr. Templemore failed in his object. The name he uttered seemed to tear her heart asunder. This man who stood by her side was her lost brother's happy rival. His success had been Paul Courtenay's death; his triumph had helped to fill the lonely grave in Glasnevin. She clasped her hands together in a mute agony, and looked at him with such passionate reproach in her eyes, that Mr. Templemore colored deeply. His lips parted to say something, but Dora did not give him time to speak.

"You are Mr. Templemore!" she cried, stepping back from him; "you are Richard Templemore!" And she uttered the name as if it were of itself sufficient denunciation.

"I am," was his brief reply.

"What had I done to you that you should inflict this upon me?" vehemently exclaimed Dora, speaking with mingled sorrow and amazement; "could you not be satisfied with your triumph over my brother? Is he not dead, and forever out of your way? What had I done to you to deserve this?"

Her passion confounded him. He looked at her pale, troubled face, and vainly attempted to fathom its meaning. Was this anger caused by his long concealment of his identity?

"Believe me," he said vehemently, "I never meant to deceive you—never! I have long known what your feelings toward me were,

and if you had not sought me as Doctor Richard, I would never have intruded myself upon you. This mistake was involuntary on my part; and since I have seen how painful it would be to you, it has become insufferable to me!"

Dora grew more calm as he spoke. But she turned her head away, for her heart was full—full almost to breaking. This man, this Richard Templemore, her brother's successful competitor, was also a wealthy man, who had practised on her credulity. She had been his toy, his plaything, and when she remembered the fond dreams into which her ignorance had led her, dreams which had haunted her this very morning, and given common pleasures the sweetness of Paradise, she could almost have wished to die, so keen was the sorrow of that moment.

"Ah! you are angry—very angry indeed," said Mr. Templemore, in a tone full of concern. "And yet you must hear me—you must indeed! I could not bear to relinquish your regard!"

"There is nothing to be heard or spoken," sadly answered Dora, walking away from the gates of the château; "nothing, Mr. Templemore—you succeeded, my brother failed, and failure was death! You were called Doctor Richard by people who seemed to know you, and you never said, 'I am that Mr. Templemore to whom you owe a bitter grief.'"

"Will you hear me?" persisted Mr. Templemore, walking by her side, and entering the wood with her; "surely in justice you must."

She was silent—he continued:

"Allow me to ask if you considered Mr. Courtenay's decision an unjust one?"

Dora colored, and turned upon him almost angrily.

"I consider the competition to have been an unjust one," she said, with ill-repressed indignation; "I consider that my brother having done nothing to forfeit, but everything to

deserve his uncle's good opinion, ought not to have had this stigma thrown upon him."

Mr. Templemore looked at her keenly.

"And perhaps you think," he remarked, "that I, a stranger as it were to Mr. Courtenay, took advantage of an old man's weakness to deprive the lawful heir?"

"Mr. Courtenay's legal right to give away his fortune, and yours to accept it, I do not question," replied Dora, with a touch of bitterness in her tone, and without looking at Mr. Templemore as she spoke.

"Then that was your impression of the case," he said, very gravely; "a severe one, Miss Courtenay, but which I can bear, for I do not deserve it. You knew that I was the nephew of Mr. Courtenay's wife; but are you aware that his fortune—all his fortune," he added, emphatically, "was derived from that wife?"

Dora turned upon him with a startled, amazed look. "No," she said, quickly; "he made it in the Funds. He told Paul so."

"He may have increased it by lucky hits," composedly replied Mr. Templemore; "but I say it again—he derived it from my aunt."

"Then it was yours, after all!" exclaimed Dora, confounded.

"It should have been mine," he corrected, "but my grandfather's caprice bestowed it on my aunt, in preference to my father. She promised to make amends to me, and I was brought up in that belief. Mr. Courtenay himself helped to deceive me. The catalogue, the competition were therefore an injustice to me, which I felt and resented. I won the race, indeed, but I only won back what I should never have risked to lose."

Dora heard him with mingled mortification and shame. So her long resentment was groundless. There was no foundation for that passionate dislike which she had nursed up against Mr. Templemore. Her past disappointment rested on an error, and was both

futile and childish. Neither she nor Paul was the wronged one, as far as money went, since that which they had received at Mr. Courtenay's death had been actually taken from Mr. Templemore's legitimate inheritance. There was something in the thought which Dora could not endure. She turned upon Mr. Templemore, and exclaimed in the bitterness of her heart—

"If Paul and I had known this, we would not have accepted Mr. Courtenay's legacy. Paul would never have competed with you, Mr. Templemore, and I should have him still."

She could not utter the last words without a quivering of the lip, which betrayed the keenness of her sorrow. He took her hand and pressed it between both his own with mingled tenderness and respect.

"Heaven alone knows how much I feel for your grief," he said with much emotion, "but surely you must see now that I am guiltless of it? Surely Mr. Templemore may hope to be as much your friend as was Doctor Richard?"

But the question awoke a new storm in Dora's heart. Let it be that her resentment had been groundless, that Mr. Templemore was innocent of all wrong to her dead brother, that Paul had been the victim of an old man's whim and a selfish girl's ambition; let all this be—and Mr. Templemore spoke with a manly frankness which her own integrity forbade her to doubt—let all this be, we say, still something was left—something that made her snatch her hand from his, and turning upon him with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, exclaim almost passionately:

"Mr. Templemore, who bought my drawings from Monsieur Merand?"

He blushed, but he was too honest to deny.

"I did," he said.

That, too, was gone—that dear illusion of her little pride in her own worth! That, too,

was gone, that fond belief in her little skill—that innocent joy over gold won by labor both pleasant and beloved. She had been living on Mr. Templemore's bounty all the time! She, Paul Courtenay's sister, had been eating Mr. Templemore's bread! The bitterness, the humiliation were both too much for her pride. She buried her face in her hands, and even through her slender fingers her tears fell fast. Mr. Templemore was dreadfully shocked.

"My dear Miss Courtenay," he said, cagerly, "do not wrong us both—do not!"

By a strong effort Dora compelled her tears to cease flowing.

"I beg your pardon," she said, looking up again, and trying to speak calmly, "but that was too much for me."

"Indeed—indeed!" said Mr. Templemore, earnestly, "if you think that I bought your drawings simply to oblige you, you wrong me. I value them highly—more than I can tell. Their merit is of the highest order. I hope you believe me?"

Dora was silent, but she did not believe him. She had some talent, of course she had, but her drawings had found but one purchaser, and he was Mr. Templemore! Oh! bitterness—bitterness that could not be put into words!

"Mr. Templemore, you meant well," she said, at length, "but you are a rich man, and you cannot understand how your kindness has given my poverty a bitter and needless sting."

"Miss Courtenay, do not upbraid me with my money. It is not so long ago since I was a struggling man, with a sickly child, in London—it is not so long ago since I had to see her wasting away before my eyes for the need of that pure air which I was too poor to purchase for her. It is not so long ago since I lost her two little sisters, and felt, as I buried them on one day, 'May God give me the grace not to hate the rich!' Ah! you have never known what it is to see a loved creature die, and to

lack the means that could save it. These means have come, indeed, but, Miss Courtenay, I often fear that even for my last child they have come too late. Pity me!—spite all my money, pity me!"

The sorrow in his looks, the pathos in his voice, went to Dora's heart. Amazement had given place to resentment, that had yielded to wounded pride, and now this melted away as she heard him remind her of his past poverty—that poverty which seemed to make him Doctor Richard once more. It vanished as he bade her pity him, spite the wealth which had come too late. She forgave him freely, fully, the past and the present all in one moment. She forgave him, and forgot, for a while, at least, that she loved him, and what she had felt keenly in the first moment of the discovery—that since Doctor Richard had not wooed the poor girl, Mr. Templemore surely never would.

"God save you from such a sorrow!" she said, fervently.

"Amen!" he no less fervently replied; then, with his serene, genial smile, he added: "I knew you could not cherish resentment against me, and of Mrs. Courtenay, I believe, I am sure."

Dora was silent; she felt languid and depressed. It seemed to her as if Mr. Templemore had given her a chance of liberty, and as if she had voluntarily cast it away.

"Doctor Richard," she began—"Mr. Templemore, I mean."

"No, do call me Doctor Richard," he interrupted—"I like it dearly. I was forced into my profession by a severe father; I hated it years, and now that I have relinquished it I love it, and I regret it. Often, when I am seated in a warm room, with every comfort around me, I remember some of the scenes I witnessed in London when I was obliged to reside in the neighborhood of St. Giles's, and I feel a longing upon me to go back amongst

those starved, squalid wretches who are the pariahs of civilization. There are plenty of them in yonder old Gothic city down below us. Vice, woe, disease are there, asking for mercy, and getting it, and alas! deserving it very rarely. There, I am Doctor Richard, Miss Courtenay; and do you wonder that, having been a poor man almost all my life, I like a name which helps to remind me of a port safely reached after a long, bitter journey?"

Dora did not answer. They had reached the end of the path, and they stood once more within view of the spot where they had spent the morning. Eva was there, between Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan, talking volubly; and Mr. Templemore, seeing the amazed faces of the two ladies, had no difficulty in guessing that the little chatterer had been unable any longer to keep his secret.

"Are you, too, a true woman, Eva?" he said. "Well, it does not matter now. I have been making my peace with Miss Courtenay, and I trust Mrs. Courtenay will likewise be good enough to forgive my unintentional cheating."

Mrs. Luan's forgiveness Mr. Templemore did not solicit. Mrs. Courtenay looked at her daughter's face, and seeing peace and goodwill there, though with the traces of recent tears, she frankly accepted Mr. Templemore's extended hand. Indeed, she looked delighted with the change in his circumstances, for if he was Dora's admirer, was it not all the better that he should be a wealthy man, and not a poor doctor? Mr. Templemore promptly followed up his advantage with a request that the ladies would spend the rest of the day at Les Roches; and Mrs. Courtenay, understanding this was his abode, candidly expressed her willingness to see it, for, as she innocently added,

"I am so glad you do not live in that dreadful tumble-down old place in our street, Doctor Richard!"

"I keep it as a storehouse for my purchases, Mrs. Courtenay, but I seldom sleep there. I reside here with Eva and my sister-in-law, Miss Moore. Eva, go first and tell your aunt we are coming."

Eva, who looked much happier since she was no longer bound to secrecy, obeyed gladly, and vanished down the path. In a few minutes they had all reached the château; the gates were open, and a lady with a green parasol, who was walking in the flower-garden, came forward to receive them.

Some secret apprehensions which Mrs. Courtenay had conceived on hearing of a sister-in-law vanished as she saw that lady. Nonesave a strictly Platonic friendship could exist between this homely-looking, middle-aged woman and the genial, imaginative Mr. Templemore.

"I am so glad the sun is shining!" was her welcome, "because Les Roches wants sun, you know. Which will you see first, the house or the grounds? Is it not a hot day?"

Her face was plump and foolish, and her manners were awkward. She blundered through speech in a silly fashion, very like the flight of a reckless butterfly, so heedlessly were the words uttered and constructed into sentences. Mrs. Courtenay, who longed to scrutinize Mr. Templemore's domestic arrangements, asked to see the house first. Dora felt no such curiosity. Every new proof of Mr. Templemore's wealth only reminded her of the distance which separated him from poor Doctor Richard.

The château of Les Roches was, however, as pleasant an abode as she had conjectured it to be from its external appearance. It had large, sunny rooms, some still hung with tapestry, and all bearing tokens of Mr. Templemore's tastes and purchases. Many a relic which she had seen in Monsieur Merand's shop Dora recognized, and in Mr. Templemore's own sitting-room, or study, she saw her copy of the Music-Lesson hanging in the frame

which had led to the exposure of the Dubois. But she felt no pride, no joy in seeing it there. She remembered the little comedy Mr. Templemore and Monsieur Merand had acted about that drawing; she remembered how he had helped her to pick up the five-franc pieces, and how his dark eyes shone with pleasure as she gathered her little hoard. But she could not bear to recollect these things—they seemed to put her on a level with little Catherine and his other protégés; and when Eva, pulling her skirt for the twentieth time since they had entered the house, whispered again, “Do come and look at the rocks,” she gladly yielded.

Scarcely had they entered a winding path behind the château, when Mr. Templemore was by their side.

“This place was laid out a hundred years ago,” he said; “and it has false ruins and artificial rocks, which have grown old and venerable, and in which Eva believes implicitly.”

“Here they are!” cried Eva, springing forward.

Dora heard a sound of water, a few steps more showed a green bank, against which rose brown rocks, covered with ferns, ivy, and a world of creeping plants and flowers. From a gap above came a silver thread of water, which was broken in its fall by a projecting stone, and bubbled away in light white foam in a marble tank below. Blue forget-me-nots and white daisies were set around its edges, and formed a flowery wreath to the crystal waters. Beyond this the shady path they had followed wound away through a green and tangled wilderness of underwood, with tall trees shooting out. Not a sunbeam pierced the leafy dome, or fell on the brown earth. The wild vine went from tree to tree, and mingled with the honeysuckle and the ivy; and in a hollow of the path appeared an old stone bench, mossy and broken; it looked ages old, a relic of the past surviving midst

the eternal freshness of nature. Dora felt troubled, languid, and depressed. Everything she saw said too plainly, “You must not hope. This is the home for love, but not for you!”

But it is very hard to resist the magic of a loved voice. Mr. Templemore was bent on winning back Dora’s lost favor, and Dora was not quite so heroic as to remain obdurate. Something of her cheerfulness returned, and when they joined the rest of the party, and Mr. Templemore persuaded them to stay to dinner, she yielded almost as willingly as her mother.

The meal, though not sumptuous, was luxurious enough. It had plate, and crystal, and every attribute of wealth. Dora remembered with a swelling heart how much her simple mother had thought of the couple of fowls and the tart she had provided for Doctor Richard and his child. She remembered her own little folly about the doll. Alas! what was Minna’s bridal finery to the rich man’s indulged daughter? What she herself had been to the father—the amusement of an hour—no more. Yet she compelled herself to talk, to laugh, to look happy and pleased.

After dinner Mr. Templemore drove them home. As he parted from them he wrung from Dora the confession that, though she wished to cherish no resentment against him, yet something remained which she could not conquer.

“Then I must,” he said, looking a little vexed, yet smiling good-humoredly—“I must prevail over that something; we must have a lasting peace!”

The warmth and earnestness of his manner sent the blood to her heart. They might mean much or nothing, and hope and reason alternately inclined to either surmise.

“Oh! what a delightful day!” cried Mrs. Courtenay.

Dora, who sat with her elbow resting on

the table, and her cheek on her hand, was mute. Mrs. Luan had been remarkably silent all day; but she now spoke:

"Dora, when is Mr. Templemore going to marry you?"

"What!" cried Dora, turning crimson.

"Has he really asked you?" eagerly said her mother.

"No," answered Dora, looking displeased.

"He will, then," muttered Mrs. Luan, nodding grimly.

If she had said "he shall" instead of "he will," Mrs. Luan would have been nearer to her meaning.

"Aunt, you are mistaken," impressively said Dora.

Mrs. Luan never argued; but she was tenacious, and never disheartened. She had parted from John to separate him from Dora; and when Dora had grown rich, she had reunited these two, then parted them again, still faithful to John's interests and her own ends. Doctor Richard was giving her a world of trouble, for she did not want him to have Dora, when, by turning into Mr. Templemore, he had set all right. He was in love with Dora, no doubt, and he should marry her. Her niece would have a rich husband, which would be a good thing for the family; and John would not marry a poor girl. He had talked of coming to Rouen, "but it would be all over then," coolly thought Mrs. Luan.

Dora little suspected what an ally her aunt meant to prove; but her mother was more candid.

"I think I shall get out the cards, and have Louis Dix-huit's patience," she said, significantly. "I could not sleep, so I may as well do that, may I not?"

Dora did not answer. But when Mrs. Courtenay began to deal out her cards, and to exclaim triumphantly, "It is going on beautifully! Well, I never had so many twos and queens all at once! It is quite remarkable,

and so encouraging!" When we say she gave vent to such exclamations with an emphasis and an eagerness which betrayed that she was secretly indulging in a wish the success of which the cards were to tell, Dora would hear no more. "And yet such things have been," she thought, as she retired to her room, and looked at the patient Griselidis on her bed-curtains; "such things have been in song and story, a long time ago, when the world was younger than it is now; but even then they were not always blessed. Poor, patient Griselidis, you paid dear for your honors." But need that price always be paid?

Dangerous question, which came like a temptation, and to which, in her pride, Dora would not even listen.

CHAPTER XX.

WE cannot live without hope. It is the very condition of our being. Dora was haunted by Mrs. Luan's words, and her mother's questioning look was as the token of a great coming joy. The thought haunted her dreams, and she found it on waking, though somewhat shorn of its glow; but the spell was broken when her mother said at breakfast:

"Come back early from the Musée, will you?"

Dora put down her cup and turned pale. The Musée!—what should take her there? Were it but for pride's sake, she must finish the drawing she had begun, take money for it from Monsieur Merand, and pretend nothing to the dealer; but after that, what should she do? A blank followed this question. Mr. Templemore was the real purchaser of her drawings, and now that she knew it, could she live on his generosity? In a moment pride was in arms, and uttered as fatal a "never" as was ever spoken. But unluckily pride failed to say how Dora was to live. Hope, so strong with the young, might have

lent her some illusions concerning labor and its rewards; but the fact that her little independence had all rested on a rich man's kindness, silenced such pleasant dreams. The will to work no longer implied success; and as Dora put down her cup, it seemed to her as if the shares in the Redmore Mines were lost anew.

But as Mrs. Courtenay evidently had no suspicion of the truth, and still believed in Monsieur Merand, Dora smiled, looked cheerful, and went to her task as if nothing had occurred. Yet her heart was very heavy. Her pencil flagged, her hand seemed to have forgotten its cunning. She leaned back in her chair, looking at the picture she was copying, and seeing it not. Every now and then, indeed, she woke from her dream, and started at the sound of a step, and felt her cheek flush if the door opened; but there was no need for these signs. Mr. Templemore did not come to fill up Doctor Richard's vacant office. Dora was glad of it; she did not wish for or expect it, and yet, if she had questioned her heart very keenly, she might have found disappointment there.

But Mr. Templemore had called on her mother during her absence. He had come with an invitation for a week's stay at Les Roches, which Mrs. Courtenay had accepted.

"The carriage is to come for us next Monday," resumed Mrs. Courtenay.

Dora was silent. She was happy, and she could not help it. But when Mrs. Courtenay resumed, as a matter of course, "When you are Mr. Templemore's wife," Dora rebelled and interrupted her hastily.

"Mamma, you must never say that!"

"Nonsense! You never can do better—and any one can see that he wishes it!"

The truth was, that Mrs. Luan and Mrs. Courtenay had so talked the matter over during Dora's absence, that had any one told Mrs. Courtenay Mr. Templemore had no thought

of marrying her daughter she would have felt both indignant and aggrieved. Of the three Dora was by far the least sanguine; for, after all, such was the thought that ever came back—if Mr. Templemore wanted her, why did he not speak? He could have spoken as Doctor Richard, and he had been mute! Was not such silence significant? Was it not also very significant that he neither came near them nor dropped in upon Dora at the picture-gallery? He came not to cheer or to interrupt her with his comments. She went on with her drawing, she finished it, she took it to Monsieur Merand, and was paid for it, without having once seen Mr. Templemore. Ah! how heavy her heart felt as she left that quiet gallery, and thought, "I shall need to come here no more!" How sad and depressed she was when Monsieur Merand put the money in her hand, and looking at the gold, she no longer felt, "I, too, have a gift, and, lo! it has brought me in this!" He had meant well, no doubt; but how sadly it had ended! And next Monday they were all going to his house! What for? Doctor Richard had been their friend, but there was, there could be, nothing between them and Mr. Templemore.

"Does not Monsieur Merand want any more drawings?" asked Mrs. Courtenay, when Dora came home.

"No, mamma, he does not—and how are we to live?"

Mrs. Courtenay looked bewildered, Mrs. Luan's sallow cheek flushed as she said,

"Mr. Templemore will make him take them!"

"Aunt, you know Monsieur Merand was no one."

"My dear," airily said Mrs. Courtenay, "I feel quite sure of Mr. Templemore's intentions! Never mind about the drawings!"

Dora would not argue. She went to her room. The lame teacher's window was open. She could see him and his wife taking their

frugal dinner. There was a look of calm content about them, too, which stung Dora, and made her think—

"Oh! why have I been mad? Doctor Richard is dead, and comes no more!"

But she would not be weak, she would not remember that there had been a time when she had watched this domestic happiness as something that might one day be within her reach. She glanced up toward Nanette's window.

"I, too, may live a poor lonely woman like you," she thought. "I, too, may need a pound of candles to cheer me through the long dark night. Well, another pound, the last, perhaps, I can afford to give, you shall have."

She slipped out unseen, made her little purchase, then stole up to Nanette's room. The door was ajar, Dora pushed it open and looked in. Neither welcome nor token of recognition came from the low bed on which Nanette lay. With a doubtful look at the pale, sunken face resting motionless on the white pillow, Dora said gently,

"Nanette, I bring you candles."

"Nanette needs none, Miss Courtenay," replied Mr. Templemore, whom the half-open door had concealed from Dora's view. "A brighter light will soon, let us hope, be shining before those poor wearied eyes of hers."

Dora, who had given a nervous start on hearing his voice, now entered the room. Nanette lay in a sort of stupor, and Mr. Templemore stood by the bed, looking down at the sick woman with a grave, attentive gaze.

"Has she long been ill, Doctor Richard—I mean Mr. Templemore?" asked Dora.

"Call me Doctor Richard here, Miss Courtenay. Nanette has been ill two days. She sank into this stupor an hour ago. Till then she was quite conscious. Poor old Nanette! That woman had a fine, proud nature, Miss Courtenay. Her incessant lament all night was that she had not been able to work to the last.

But she had her weakness too. She begged hard not to be taken to the hospital, and when I gave her my word of honor to save her from this calamity, her gratitude knew no bounds. She actually gave me that fine enamel which is so like you. Do you know if she has any relatives to whom I can make compensation for a gift so valuable?"

"No, she has none. But Doctor Richard, is she dying?"

"She is, Miss Courtenay. You surely do not regret to see the prison gate opened, and the poor captive set free? Think of her sad, lonely life, and say if it be not an act of God's mercy to call her away to liberty!"

"Why did I not come near her all this time?" thought Dora with keen self-reproach—"why was I absorbed in my own thoughts, and did I forget this poor creature whom God seemed to have thrown on my kindness?"

"I might perhaps have saved her," resumed Mr. Templemore, after a pause; "though illness at her age is too often fatal; but Petit had been with her. Petit," he continued, answering Dora's questioning look, "is a man whom science has licensed to kill. In plain speech, he is a doctor by his diploma only, but in nothing else. Miss Courtenay, I do not exaggerate when I say that this man deals out death. I have seen his handiwork, and I have often thought with horror that my little Eva might fall into his hands. It is not likely, to be sure; but I once saw a child—a beautiful child whom that man had murdered, lying dead before me in this very city, and the mother's cry of agony I never shall forget."

"And is there no means to prevent that?" asked Dora, horrified.

"What means? He is well known to medical men; but, like all false prophets, he has his disciples, chiefly amongst the ignorant and the poor; and as the man is not really cruel or bad-hearted, but simply stupid and ignorant, he cheats himself as well as his adherents."

"And did he kill this poor creature too, Mr. Templemore!" indignantly exclaimed Dora.

"That I dare not say, but I should not wonder if he did. However, he affronted her, and so she sent for me; but I am powerless."

There was a long pause, which made Nanette's heavy breathing very distinct. The sun was near its setting, a gorgeous glow from the west filled the poor little room, and a rosy flush fell on the dying woman's face. From the spot where she stood Dora could look down at Madame Bertrand's house, and see her own room through the window, which she had left open. That room was still haunted with fond dreams and sad regrets and struggles for self-subjection, and what did they all seem now when she looked at Nanette? Seventy-three years of care and poverty and bitter trials were written in that thin worn face before her; but the story would soon be blotted out by the hand of death, and what trace, what token would be left of it then upon earth? Did it matter so much to be blest or wretched when this was the end?

Happy are they who can take such lessons, and who do not feel, like the French king, that he must change the site of a palace, because the spires of Saint Denis, where his predecessors were buried, are in view. The haughty Louis Quatorze rebelled under that *memento mori*. Was it not enough to know that he must go down some day to those chill dark vaults, and sleep there with all the kings and queens of his race?—was it not enough to know this?—must a young sovereign, with La Vallières and Montespan, and dreams of conquest to boot, be forever told that he was mortal, and must die? It was too hard, surely, and not to be endured, unless by some ascetic or careless monarch, one full of heaven or reckless of death—a Saint Louis or a Henri Quatre.

But not so felt Dora. Every deep, earnest, and religious impulse of her nature rose and was strong within her as she stood by this death-bed. She scorned her own dreams as she looked up at Mr. Templemore. She triumphed over them and trampled them with a ruthless foot. From that hour forth there was a change in her both strong and deep. Something she could not conquer, because even self-subjection has its limits, but all that will can rule she mastered, and the power then acquired she let go no more.

Mr. Templemore, too, had his thoughts.

"And this is the end of youth and beauty!" he could not help thinking, as he looked at Nanette, and from her to Dora with her blooming face and her pensive gray eyes, and that hair of brown gold which a blue ribbon tied back in the graceful Greek fashion. "Ah! what folly, then, it is to forget the brevity of life, and the treacherous power of Time!"

And Mr. Templemore, too, was right; for surely Death reads the two lessons. Surely it teaches us masterdom over self, and preaches the wisdom of happiness. Blessed are they to whom the task of reconciling those two does not prove too hard!

Madame Bertrand now came in, and Mr. Templemore, saying, "I shall call in again," went away.

"There goes an angel," emphatically said Madame Bertrand, taking a chair, and settling herself down, by the bedside in the attitude of a professional nurse. "He sat with Nanette all last night. Doctor Richard would do anything for me," she continued, with a certain complacency, and taking as a personal compliment his kindness to the sick woman; "but it is wonderful how every one, save Monsieur Theodore, has always liked me. Nanette, who could endure no one, doted on me."

"She was religious," said Dora, following

her own train of thought—"I am sure she loved God. I remember how she once said to me that as she lay awake at night, and saw the stars shining in the sky, she used to feel full of wonder and delight at the Almighty's greatness."

"Oh! yes," said Madame Bertrand, nodding; "she was *so* pious, and *so* cross," she added, in a breath. "She asked for the Cure at once, poor soul! He wanted to send some one to sit up with her, but Nanette would be alone. Luckily she took a fancy to Doctor Richard, who stayed with her to oblige me."

"Are you staying with her now, Madame Bertrand?"

"Yes, my cousin will cook madame's dinner."

The words recalled Dora to the necessity of going home. She was silent concerning Nanette's story. Mrs. Courtenay could never understand how people could be ill, and got irritable when they ventured on dying. Besides, she now indulged in such bright anticipations concerning their visit to Les Roches—everything was to be so happy, and so delightful, and so charming—that Dora could not help smiling as she listened to her.

"My dear little mother," she thought, with a half sigh, "how happy I shall be, spite of it all, if I can but make *you* happy!"

Mrs. Courtenay went to bed early, and thus Dora could go and see Nanette again without saddening her mother's cheerful mood. Mrs. Luan, indeed, stared, and looked up from her patchwork as Dora left, but she put no question. Her niece often went and prayed of an evening in Notre Dame before it was closed for the night, and such, Mrs. Luan concluded, now was her errand.

But the divine presence of Him who came to suffer with and for the afflicted is not confined to temples and tabernacles built by man's hand. Dora knew that we find Him in the homes of the needy, in the lazaret-house, in the

prison, and that it is the weakness of our faith and the coldness of our hearts that will not let us seek Him there.

Madame Bertrand had lit a candle, but she had forgotten to snuff it, and its long wick and dull yellow light looked dismal in the narrow room.

"It is melancholy here, mademoiselle," said Madame Bertrand, as Dora came in; "poor Nanette cannot say a word. Then I do not like to think that she is going to die. Look at her bit of a body—does it not seem hard there should be no more room for her? But there is not. Some one else is being born just now, and Nanette must make way. I shall miss her. I used to like seeing her go by leaning on her stick, scolding the children. Now, poor soul, she cannot help herself."

No, she could not, indeed. Nanette had already entered that shadowy region where human will is weak, and Dora thought, as she looked at her, that she was travelling very fast indeed toward that deeper darkness in which it becomes powerless. Something in Dora's face told Madame Bertrand the nature of her thoughts.

She rose and looked at the sick woman, and shook her head.

"I believe it will soon be over, mademoiselle," she whispered beneath her breath. "Will you read the prayer to her?"

"What prayer?" asked Dora, rather startled.

"Well, it is not a prayer exactly, I mean the 'Go forth, thou Christian soul!' She wanted me to read it this morning, and I said she was not to think of these things; but to get well again. And still she wanted it, but you see I—I could not—and will you read it?"

She put a prayer-book in Dora's hands, and Dora, though very white and pale, said not nay. Yes, she would read to the dying and unconscious woman that solemn and pathetic

adju-ration which had been appointed for the dying Christian. Her brother had passed away to his rest—not unprepared she hoped—but without the tender and holy rites of the Church, without a sister's loving voice to call down Heaven's aid for the traveller on that last trying journey; but Nanette had been, and should be still more favored. She had been strengthened with the bread of life, and even though she heard it not, Dora could now bid her go forth to her eternal home in holy Sion. She would summon every choir of angels to receive her, she would bid holy saints and martyrs, and the greatest and the purest, welcome their poor mortal sister to the house of the one Father; she would ask for this little despised old woman such honor and such reverence as kings themselves never get upon earth.

She knelt, and opening the book she began reading, in a voice which, though tremulous and low at first, grew in power as she proceeded. Far away in the heart of the city, a French soldier's drum was calling in the men to the barracks. In the street below a workman was singing as he came home from work, and still Dora's clear voice went on holding forth heavenly promises, and bringing down the Divine presence to that humble sick-room. And so whilst poor Nanette's soul was passing away, all the sounds blended around her, as in the old mediæval chorus, where the tenor or the soprano sang of love, the barytone of wine and glory, and the bass uttered a solemn Latin hymn, and the three produced a strange simultaneous harmony.

All was over, and as Dora uttered the last prayer, and closed the book, a voice behind her said,

"Amen."

She was not startled—she had heard Mr. Templemore enter the room whilst she read, and was prepared for his appearance.

"So I come too late," he said, looking tow-

ard the bed; "well, I could have done nothing."

He spoke with the gravity which the presence of death commands, but also with the composure which habit gives to men of his profession. Dora looked sad and thoughtful, and Madame Bertrand was crying, not exactly through grief, poor soul, but because tears came easily to her. This was all; there was no one else to lament that a lone woman had gone to her rest, and, as Madame Bertrand philosophically remarked, made way for some one who was now being born.

Dora's presence was no longer needed. So she left, after Madame Bertrand had gone to fetch a neighbor, who agreed to sit up with her. Mr. Templemore took a candle and lit her down the dark staircase. He looked thoughtful, and before they were half way down he stood still.

"Miss Courtenay," he said, impressively. "You knew Nanette for some time; you kindly took her candles, as she told me. May I ask if she lamented to you, as to me, that she could not work?"

"Very often, Doctor Richard." The name came quite naturally.

"Strange, is it not? Nanette was no lady, you see. A born lady, a real lady dies if she must use or soil the hands God gave her for ornament—not for use; but a plebeian like Nanette thinks herself wretched if she has to eat the bread of idleness and charity. Well, I knew a weaver who, in his way, was as great an oddity as our poor little friend up-stairs. That man's passion was to pay the old debts which a series of misfortunes and troubles had bequeathed to him. He stinted himself, his wife and his child, for that. The end was almost won. The weakness of coming prosperity was creeping over him. His wife actually bought him a woollen jacket, and though he grumbled at her prodigal deed, he grumbled gently. The evenings were getting chill, and comfort is pleasant at fifty-three. This piece

of extravagance was perpetrated on a Saturday in October. On that same day the man gave an old coat to the village tailor, in order that it might be made a new one of. 'I shall want it for All Saints,' he said. Glimmerings of pleasure were in that man's mind, and followed him at his loom. Over that bright dawn came a sudden darkness—the darkness of death. On the Monday evening he was taken ill; on the Tuesday morning he was a corpse. Within that brief space he tasted the greatest bitterness which his heart could know. 'I shall die like a rogue!' he said to me again and again; 'I shall die without having paid my debts!' Miss Courtenay, when I think of that man, with his nice honor, and of the hundreds who cheat and swindle in the very jaws of death, I feel a sort of grief and pity stronger than I can tell. I grieve that some should be so pure, and others so foul: that of coins all from the same Divine mint, some should be of metal so sterling, and others, alas! so base."

He spoke gravely and sadly, with one hand resting on the banisters, and the other holding the old brass candlestick he had brought with him from Nanette's room. The pleasure he found in thus imparting his passing thoughts to Dora, made him forget that he was detaining her on the old staircase. It was not the first time she had noticed how favorite a listener she was with him; how he liked to think aloud when she was by. That link of sympathy, one of the purest which can exist between two human beings, did certainly exist between them; perhaps because Dora had that quickness of intuition which makes a good listener. She now said, with a wistful look:

"But that weaver did not die broken-hearted, Mr. Templemore—you paid his debts."

"How do you know?" he asked, coloring slightly.

"I do not know—I only guess."

"Well, I did, Miss Courtenay," he resumed, lighting her down the staircase as he spoke;

"with fourteen pounds sterling I relieved that man from a sense of disgrace, but he groaned heavily under the burden of the gift. The poor fellow longed with his whole soul to pay me; from that bitterness I could not save him, you see."

Dora did not answer. They had reached the foot of the staircase, and went out silently into the street—there they parted quietly. Dora found Mrs. Luan sitting up for her.

"Were you in the church all that time?" she asked.

"No; I was with a sick woman."

"Was Mr. Templemore there?"

"Yes, he was."

Mrs. Luan's face almost brightened; but Dora was too full of her own thoughts to see it. She was not sad, she was not unhappy; but it was long, very long, indeed, before she could fall asleep that night.

CHAPTER XXI.

It would have been hard to guess, from Mr. Templemore's dark, genial face, as he welcomed his guests to Les Roches, that he and Dora had followed poor Nanette to her grave that morning. She, too, looked bright and gay, but when Mr. Templemore said, "Eva has been dying to see you—she has fallen in love with you, you know, Miss Courtenay,"—when he spoke thus in his most friendly tone, and Mrs. Courtenay looked beaming and triumphant, and whispered, as she glanced around her, "The mistress of all this will be a happy woman," no voice within Dora said, 'Maybe you will be she.' "The wife of Doctor Richard would have been the happier woman of the two," was all she thought. She would not think of Mr. Templemore save as her kind and courteous host; and, indeed, friendly though was his manner, there was nothing in it to justify the belief that he had lured Dora

to his house for the purpose of love-making. The attraction which kept Eva and Fido by Dora's side existed for Mr. Templemore too. He certainly liked to sit, to walk, to talk with his bright and genial young guest; yet no more than Eva or Fido could he be said to show symptoms of love, and Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan, who had at first put a meaning in everything, began to perceive this, and to feel disappointed. Their expectations rose every morning, and fell every night. But Dora took each day's pleasure and happiness as it came, and in her careless pride looked for no more.

On the fourth day of their sojourn at Les Roches, Mr. Templemore took them all to visit a pretty Gothic church, which was but a short distance from them by rail. The little house of God stood on a height above the village to which it belonged, in the centre of a narrow churchyard, and surrounded by trees, that gave it a lone and sylvan aspect. Miss Moore kept very close to Dora and her brother-in-law; but if she felt any uneasiness, nothing in Mr. Templemore's conversation on Gothic architecture and stained glass justified it. Dora saw her aunt watching them with evident eagerness and interest. Miss Moore, feeling perfectly secure, had left them for a few minutes, and she thought, with mingled scorn and amusement,

"Poor aunt! she little suspects it is all about that old window!"

Indeed, Dora would have been very blind if she had not discovered by this that the pleasure Mr. Templemore took in her society was chiefly an intellectual pleasure. She had both judgment and knowledge. She could understand and appreciate as well as listen, and Mr. Templemore was fond of talking, not for its own sake, not to say anything, but as one of the modes in which thought can best be called forth. Moreover, and whatever his feelings for her might be, he liked a listener

none the worse for wearing Dora's bright youthful aspect. She seldom answered him, save in monosyllables, but she had an eloquent face, across which meaning passed with the suddenness of light, dark-gray eyes, deep and earnest, and a serious yet naïve grace of look and attitude, when she listened, which gave her something of the irresistible charm of childhood. There were subtle distinctions, and though some of them escaped Dora, her perceptions were too fine not to tell her much which those around her did not suspect.

But Mrs. Luan, whose feelings were neither keen nor delicate, saw matters very differently. She watched her niece and Mr. Templemore with the utmost eagerness, and her face darkened when Miss Moore suddenly joined them.

"Oh! Mr. Templemore," eagerly said this lady, as if to account for her abrupt approach, "do tell us the legend of this church—about the devil, you know."

"Oh! pray tell it!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, joining them—"I do so like legends about him!"

"Oh! this is the old story. The devil helped the architect to build this church on the usual terms, but instead of fulfilling his contract, the shabby architect applied to a holy monk, who released him, and sent the devil away discomfited."

Mrs. Courtenay looked disappointed.

"Poor fellow," she said a little plaintively, "how they do cheat him!"

"Yes, it is too bad," replied Mr. Templemore, gravely.

There was no more to be seen; they left the church, and Mrs. Luan seized the first opportunity she could find to join her niece. She took her arm, held her fast, and with some sudden force compelled her to stand still in the path whilst the others went on.

"Well?" she said, staring eagerly in her face.

"Well, aunt?" composedly replied Dora.

"You know my meaning!" excitedly resumed Mrs. Luan.

"Yes, aunt; and here is my answer: he will as soon make love to you as he ever will to me."

Mrs. Luan heard her in some consternation, and Dora availed herself of the feeling to disengage her arm from her aunt's hold, and join the rest of the party.

"We are to dine at the sign of the 'White Horse,'" breathlessly said Eva, running up to Dora. "Papa is sure you will like dining once at a French village inn."

"I shall like it of all things," gayly replied Dora.

The "White Horse" stood at the entrance of the village. It was such an inn as painters delight in; an old, low, straggling house, with heavy gable ends, beneath which lurked deep shadows. Its once red brick had been baked by time into a mellow brown tone; its small irregular windows had greenish diamond panes, that now gave back the sunset brightness; and its tall chimney-stacks sent forth wreaths of blue smoke, which drifted gently in the westerly wind.

Everything about this quiet house wore a peaceful and friendly aspect. It stood by the roadside, shadowed by two broad trees, facing the south, and looking strangely snug and homely. Hens cackled in front of the open door, through which you saw the fire burning brightly on the kitchen hearth; ducks swam in a shallow rippling pond, and an old gray donkey was tied to one of the trees, and vainly stretched his neck to reach a bundle of hay tantalizingly thrown on the green sward before him. A warm and rather stormy sunset glow came streaming from the west, lighting up the winding road with its level rays, giving Venetian splendor to the brick front of the inn, and turning into misty gold the deep purple of the undulating background of wide plain.

The landlady came out all smiles to meet her guests, and show them into a broad low

room, with windows looking over the straggling village street, and across which vine-leaves made a chequered screen. The cloth was laid, and a tureen full of rustie but delicious soup was smoking on the table. Eva asked to be lifted up to peep at its brown contents, and Fido turned up his nose and snuffed with evident approbation.

"Oh! how charming!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, clasping her hands with rapture.

Dora, too, looked gay and merry. A hard future enough lay before her, and she knew it; but she was young and buoyant, and she could snatch its delight out of the present time, nor darken the bright to-day with the gloom of to-morrow. Mrs. Luan, however, was black as a thunder-cloud, and Miss Moore had something to do not to look surprised and bored. It was just like Mr. Templemore to bring them back to the ways of that old poverty which they had both gone through, and of which she so disliked—hated would be too strong a word, Miss Moore hated nothing—the very remembrance. But spite these two, the dinner—a very good one—was a merry meal. Mr. Templemore was as joyous as a schoolboy, and Dora as gay as a lark. Did she really feel in such high spirits, or did she want to convince her aunt that she was heart-free? There might be something in this, and yet it was impossible to look at her bright face, and hear her clear ringing laugh, and not believe in the sincerity of her mirth. A doubt on the subject never came near Mr. Templemore; and when dinner was over, and they all left the inn and walked slowly toward the station, Eva, as usual, clinging to Dora's side, and Fido wagging slowly behind her, he purposely lingered by her to say—

"I wish, Miss Courtenay, you would let me consider myself a sort of relation of yours; I am your uncle's nephew by marriage, you know. I wish you would let my little Eva have cousinship with you."

"With great pleasure," replied Dora, smiling; but her look unconsciously added, "why so?"

"Perhaps she might acquire with the title some of your happy gift of enjoyment," he said, answering the question; "you have it in a rare degree, even for the daughter of an Irishman and of a Frenchwoman."

Dora smiled again, but this time there was triumph and pride in the smile. Yes, she had so far prevailed over herself, she had so deeply buried every pining hope, every vain regret, that he could say this.

And thus Eva called her Cousin Dora, to Miss Moore's amazement and Mrs. Courtenay's delight. But Mrs. Luan was not satisfied. This man was enjoying her brother's fortune. no explanation of Dora's could remove this impression from her narrow mind; he was rolling in wealth, whilst John, poor John, who had written to her that morning that he was coming to see her—or Dora, perhaps, but he did not say so—was toiling in London. Should he then be allowed to go on trifling thus with her niece, leaving the great peril of a marriage between her and John still impending, like a sword of Damocles? Again and again the stubborn voice which often spoke within Mrs. Luan said "No."

To ask an agreeable girl to be adopted cousin to one's little daughter is a very remote step on the road to courtship. Sanguine though Mrs. Courtenay felt, she, too, thought so when she exchanged comments with Mrs. Luan on this incident. So a consultation was held by these ruling powers, and therein it was ordered that Mr. Templemore's backwardness—for Mrs. Courtenay had not the faintest doubt of his intentions—all lay to Miss Moore's account. How could Mr. Templemore speak when Miss Moore showed an affection for Dora's society, which rivalled Fido's? It might be politeness, but Mrs. Courtenay thought it downright planning.

Mrs Luan was silent; she did not complain of the enemy, but she acted, and Miss Moore, who looked on this stupid, heavy woman with the most complacent contempt, fell into the first snare spread before her. Nothing was more easily done.

Miss Moore objected to raw starch, and had said so in Mrs. Luan's hearing; and so Dora's aunt, with a stolidity which defied penetration, declared, as they were all sitting in the garden one afternoon, admiring the last autumn flowers, that she had just seen Marie, the French maid, throwing water on the starch instead of boiling it. Miss Moore heard, believed, and was gone. But unluckily little perverse Eva at once came and took the place her aunt had left vacant on the bench by Dora, and rested her head on the young girl's shoulder, evidently intending to remain thus. Starch boiled or unboiled would not lure Eva away, and Mrs. Luan was like Molière's Marquis, her impromptus were all most leisurely concocted; so she stood looking on bewildered, till Mrs. Courtenay fortunately, but most unconsciously—she was too thoughtless for a plot—came to her assistance.

"Eva, my dear," she said, "you have not shown me your flower-garden."

"This way," cried Eva, jumping down with great alacrity, and showing Mrs. Courtenay the way. Mrs. Luan followed; we need not say how strong an interest she took in Eva's garden, and thus Dora remained alone with Mr. Templemore. She rose at once. A nervous emotion always seized and mastered her when she was alone with Mr. Templemore.

They stood on the edge, and within the shade of the green world which enclosed the little château and its flowery garden. The red sunlight lit up the brown front of the building, and gave gorgeousness to its walls, flights of steps, vases, and flowers. The glass window-panes were turned into sheets of fire, the weather-cocks on the turrets were rods of

solid gold. Every thing looked enchanting and splendid, and the thin, yellow leaves on a tree beyond the house quivered on a background of blue air as softly and as tenderly as if fanned by breezes of spring. Dora admired the beautiful picture, but she admired in silence; she now cared to praise nothing that belonged to Mr. Templemore.

"Miss Courtenay," he suddenly remarked, "would you like to live at Les Roches—I mean all the year round?"

He spoke earnestly, but quite frankly, his eyes meeting hers in all honesty of purpose. Dora felt her face burn, but she replied quietly:

"Les Roches must have winter as well as summer attractions."

Mr. Templemore did not seem satisfied.

"Would you like it?" he urged; then, without giving her time to reply, he added, "Pray hear me before you say yes or no."

Was it possible? Had the moment come? Were her aunt's predictions, and her mother's wishes, and her own secret ill-conquered hopes and desires so soon to be fulfilled? She stood still, listening so intently that her breath seemed gone. But it fared with her as with the Arab maiden whose story she had once read. Whilst her pitcher was filling at the well, she was borne to a delightful island, thence removed to a dreary wilderness, imprisoned in an enchanted tower, and after undergoing every happy and sorrowful variety of adventure, brought back to the well before her pitcher was full.

"It is impossible to know you and not admire you, Miss Courtenay; impossible not to appreciate the extraordinary mixture of original talent and good sense—for one often excludes the other—which is in you. Do not therefore think me too selfish if I wish in some measure to appropriate gifts so rare. Will you undertake the charge of my little Eva's education?"

Whilst he spoke, Dora, like the Arab girl,

went through every vicissitude. Hope soared on happy wings to empyreal heights, then sank down prostrate, a chained captive. Whilst he spoke, and the sound of his words fell on the air, a splendid vision faded into darkness, a palace of delight was laid low, and by the shock of the ruin Dora felt how deep in her heart its foundations had been.

Mr. Templemore took her silence for that of consideration, and he respected it; but he looked at her anxiously.

There was not a particle of foolish sentiment about Dora. She carried a clear positiveness in her feelings, though they were so warm and ardent. Romantic she was in her love of the strange and the wonderful; she had also a touch of poetry that lingered around her, and gave her the fresh fragrance of a wild flower; but sentimental she was not. Bitter and cruel though was the shock she had received, she rallied from it almost at once; and what was more, she indulged in no illusions. The man who wanted her to be his child's governess was not a lover, and never would be one. She turned to Mr. Templemore, and she answered with a smile:

"I am not qualified—I have never taught."

"And it is that which helps to make you so invaluable, Miss Courtenay."

"I cannot leave my mother," said Dora, gravely; "besides—"

"Excuse me," he interrupted, "I never contemplated that you and Mrs. Courtenay should part. To tell you the truth, I have had an apartment prepared for her, and another for you and Eva. I was not so presumptuous as to feel sure of you, but the illusion, if it was one, was so pleasant that I could not, or rather that I would not forbear indulging in it."

"You forget my aunt, Mrs. Luan."

"Is not Mrs. Luan going to England to join her son?" asked Mr. Templemore. "She told me so this morning."

But Mrs. Luan had told Dora nothing of the kind. She had, as with a presentiment that her ungracious presence might mar all, spoken to Mr. Templemore; but to her niece, to her sister-in-law, she had not so much as read a line of John's letter. Dora was taken by surprise, and her heart, too, felt heavy and sad. It was natural that when means failed, Mrs. Luan should go and join her son; but it was also a token that Dora's fortunes were very low indeed. No doubt Mr. Templemore thought so too. No doubt not caring to employ her any longer at the Musée, he had hit on these means to be useful to her. Dora's color deepened at the thought, and there was a sudden light in her eyes, as, looking up, she said—

"No—it cannot be."

Mr. Templemore looked so disappointed that Dora could not think he had simply meant to oblige her.

"Dear Miss Courtenay," he urged, "do think over this, and consult with Mrs. Courtenay."

Dora assented, and half smiled at the thought of Mrs. Courtenay's indignant amazement when she should hear the news. And yet why be angry with him? It was no crime of his that they were poor, and that Dora must work to live. In making such a proposal he only assumed the privilege of friendship. If he had been her cousin, indeed, he could have done it, and neither her aunt nor her mother would have wondered.

"I will not be proud," thought Dora, taking herself to task at something which rose within her and made her heart swell. "I will remember his goodness to us all, and refuse or accept his offer from no mean or ungenerous motive!"

Eva now ran to meet them, exclaiming in great glee,

"Mrs. Luan says my garden is beautiful!—beautiful!"

"Beautiful!" repeated Mrs. Luan, coming up.

She gave Dora a furtive glance; her niece looked flushed and pensive—Mrs. Luan liked these signs. Dora, indeed, was both grave and quiet during the rest of the evening, but she was scarcely aware of it herself, and she had retired to her room for the night, and sat by the window thinking over Mr. Templemore's proposal, when the sudden entrance of Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan made her look up in some surprise at this joint visit.

"My dear, we are come to know," said Mrs. Courtenay, sitting down. "We saw Mr. Templemore talking to you so very earnestly, and though we can guess what it was all about, still we want to know."

"Know what, mamma?"

"Did not Mr. Templemore propose to you?"

"He made a proposal; but—"

"My dear," almost screamed her mother, raising her shrill little voice, and clasping her hands in alarm, "don't say that you have not accepted him!"

"Mr. Templemore made a proposal which I did not accept," began Dora; "but—"

Mrs. Luan groaned, and sank down on a chair.

"The idiot has refused him," she said; "a man who has a thousand a year!"

Mr. Templemore had more; but Mrs. Luan's imagination could not go beyond a thousand. Dora looked at her aunt with just a touch of quiet disdain.

"Mr. Templemore has asked me to be Eva's governess," she said, "and I have not accepted."

Mrs. Courtenay opened her mouth, and stared in blank dismay. Mrs. Luan turned crimson, and said sullenly,

"I don't believe it!—I don't believe it!"

"You must believe it, aunt; it is so."

"Eva's governess!" faintly said Mrs. Cour-

tenay. "He has not asked you to be his wife?"

"No, and he never will," firmly replied Dora. "The only question is, shall I accept or not? He would give you an apartment here, and as aunt, it seems, is going to England to join John, the plan is feasible enough."

"He is a very rude man!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, feeling extremely angry with the delinquent. "Did you ask him for a situation?"

"No, I did not; but I did not ask him either to draw for Monsieur Merand, and be paid handsomely for it. Mamma, we must look our future in the face, and not quarrel with our only friend because he wants to make our lot less hard than it would be without him. I want to work, but work I have not got. I have already thought of taking a situation."

"And leaving me!" screamed Mrs. Courtenay, in horror.

"Ay! there it is!" replied Dora, much affected. "We love each other, and cannot bear to part."

"You always said that even if you married we should remain together," resumed Mrs. Courtenay, looking injured.

"What am I to do?" asked Dora, despondently. "If girls, poor superfluous creatures as they are, were only drowned like kittens at their birth, there would not be this terrible difficulty to provide work for them when they are grown up, you see. I am clever enough, I believe I can do twenty things, but for all that, a situation is the only door open to me. The drawing made me happy, oh! so happy! but it was a delusion, a dream, and Mr. Templemore himself dare not suggest it again—it is so patent!"

She sighed, and Mrs. Courtenay burst into tears. Three kittens, the offspring of Madame Bertrand's cat, had been ignominiously drowned in a tub of water a fortnight before,

and on hearing Dora lament that she had not undergone such a fate at her birth, Mrs. Courtenay was fairly overpowered by her feelings.

"Dear mamma," exclaimed Dora, much concerned, "you must be brave, you must!"

"And how can I be brave?" asked Mrs. Courtenay, "when you talk of drowning and kittens in that dreadful way, and want to leave me?"

"I do not want to leave you, but—"

"Well, then, why not take the situation Mr. Templemore offers you?" asked Mrs. Courtenay, wholly forgetting how angry she was with that gentleman—"that way we need not part, and Les Roches is a delightful place, and I am sure he would give a liberal salary."

Dora was silent. Yes, she too could see all the advantages of this scheme. It would be a haven instead of a stormy journey, peace and rest instead of trouble and toil; but are not these good sometimes, and is there not danger often lurking in the smoothest lot? Danger!—what danger? asked Pride, and at once answered: "I fear none such. I stand secure from all such peril. There was a folly once, but I have thrust it back so deep, that it will never rise to light again—never! Then speak not of danger to me."

But the very thought Dora thus repelled came back from Mrs. Courtenay's lips.

"My dear," she exclaimed, suddenly brightening, "depend upon it, Mr. Templemore means to ask you to marry him, after all. Only he wants to see how you can get on with Eva first."

"Mamma," answered Dora, coldly, "I have no wish to think of him in that light—it is not right; besides, I am proud, and do not like it. Let the only question be, shall I, or shall I not, be Eva's governess?"

"My dear, I do not think you can do better than to say yes—don't you think so, Mrs. Luan?"

But Mrs. Luan had slipped out of the room unperceived.

"I need not give an answer at once," said Dora, looking a little irresolute, "so I shall think over it."

But Mrs. Courtenay, whose brightest hopes had suddenly revived, though she saw the expediency of not expressing them to Dora, could not help urging her daughter not to hesitate about such an offer. In her opinion, such hesitation was almost wrong. Dora heard her with her cheek resting on her left hand, and her eyes bent on the floor. She thought, with a sigh of regret, of those days when she worked at the Musée for Monsieur Merand, cheered by Doctor Richard's counsel and approbation. She remembered them, and with them some idle fancies in which she had then indulged—dreams in which she was Doctor Richard's wife, and they worked together, he writing, she drawing, in the same room, both poor, yet both happy. What were Les Roches, and servants, and a liberal salary, to that tender but now lost folly? For could she doubt that to make her his child's instructress had been his object all along? That had been her value and attraction in his eyes.

"And that shall be all I will now look at," thought Dora. "Never, if I accept, shall I forget that position—never!"

"Well, my dear, I suppose you will have made up your mind to-morrow?" said Mrs. Courtenay, rising, with a sigh of apprehension.

"I dare say I shall say 'yes,' mamma," replied Dora, gravely.

"Do," eagerly said her mother—"do, my dear. Good-night. God bless you!"

But the blessing did not seem to leave peace behind it. Dora thought of her little independence, of that dear liberty for which the luxurious comforts of Les Roches could offer no compensation, and she sighed. Restlessness followed her to her pillow, and chased away sleep.

"Oh! if I could but say no!" she thought, with a yearning, passionate wish for the sweet freedom which a little money gives.

But even as she thought thus, her room door opened, and some one entered the apartment.

"Who is there?" exclaimed Dora, in some alarm.

"It is I," replied Mrs. Luan's voice in the darkness. She approached Dora's bed, and standing there, she said, "You must accept Mr. Templemore's offer, Dora; and if you do, you will assuredly become Mr. Templemore's wife."

"Aunt!" cried Dora.

"Hush! do as I say, and I will answer for the end. When he sees you daily he will love you; and when he loves you, he will marry you."

"Aunt, I cannot—"

"Hush! I know you like him."

Dora was mute, and whilst her face flushed and felt hot even in the darkness, whilst her heart throbbed so that her breath seemed gone, Mrs. Luan groped out of the room. Dora sat up in the bed, and clasped her burning head between her hands. No, she could not say yes—she could not stay in Mr. Templemore's house with such predictions to haunt her.

"I will not!—I will not!" she thought again and again.

Once more her room door opened.

"Aunt!" she exclaimed, agitatedly.

But it was not Mrs. Luan, it was Mrs. Courtenay, with a light in her hand.

"My dear," she said tearfully, "you must say 'yes;' promise me that you will say 'yes.' We shall all starve if you do not! You must say 'yes.'"

She was quite hysterical, and the sight of her emotion calmed Dora as by magic.

"Dear mamma," she said cheerfully, and kissing her as she spoke, "it shall be yes."

And that yes, spoken for your sake, will be like a spell—it shall conjure away every snare and every peril.”

She spoke resolutely, but not presumptuously. That “yes” did prove a spell. It silenced at once and forever the dangerous wishes which Mrs. Luan’s words had awakened anew from their rest. They fled, to return no more. No more did Hope whisper, though ever so faintly, “Why should he not learn to care for me?”

CHAPTER XXII.

“MAKE Eva like yourself, Miss Courtenay,” said Mr. Templemore to Dora, the next day, as they stood alone in the garden—he had plainly asked Miss Moore to leave them there. “Even my paternal ambition can hope for no more.”

But, spite this complimentary remark, Dora’s face remained grave.

“I have said ‘yes,’” she replied; “but pray remember how inexperienced I am, especially in the modern system of teaching.”

“My dear Miss Courtenay, is there magic in that word modern? Is the present so very different from the past?”

“We have made progress in science, Mr. Templemore.”

“None to speak of. What are all the visions of political economy, for instance, to that grand thing, the transmutation of the baser metals into gold? You will stop me with modern unbelief, but I say it can be done, and has been done. You can *make* gold or silver, I forget which, only it is too expensive—it comes dearer than the natural thing. Well, our ancestors had the cheap process, and we have not—that is all. Then what are all our beautifiers, and enamellings, and Macassar oils, to the fountain of youth? Do not tell me it never existed unless in the brain of poets. Juan Ponce de Leon fitted out an ex-

pedition, and went to seek it. Would he have done so if it were an imaginary fountain?”

“Did he find it?” asked Dora, demurely.

“No, Miss Courtenay; but do you doubt the existence of the North Pole because Sir John Franklin perished in going to it? Shall we call that band of heroes and martyrs, dreamers?—and shall we think that people in the sixteenth century, which saw such splendid discoveries and such stirring deeds, were more foolish than they are in the nineteenth? And then the fancy, the playfulness of invention in those days! No black smoking railway engines hissing through a landscape, but enchanted cars, that flew through the thin air; or wooden horses, with pegs under their right ears, that conveyed you wherever you wished to go! Why, the theme is endless—its fertility is bewildering. Take garroting and Bill Sykes. Five hundred years ago, Bill Sykes would have been a magician—a cruel one, no doubt; but look at the superiority of these ancient times over ours. Bill Sykes, who now knocks you down, half strangles you, and after plundering your pockets, parts from you with a kick of his brutal heel on your prostrate face, Bill Sykes, I say, would have ‘enchanted you.’ Oh! delicious days, lovely days of the olden time, when you were ‘enchanted’ by your enemies—when romantic forests, or fairy palaces, or green islands were ever ready to receive you—when, if you belonged to the fair sex, knights and princes strove to release you from durance vile; and if you were some rosy young knight, a benevolent fairy, a Gloriana, ever beautiful and young, was sure to deliver you in the end.”

“But all enchantment was not mesmeric, Mr. Templemore,” gayly said Dora; “there was transformation, you know.”

“Ah! you have me there, Miss Courtenay. I am too candid to deny that the mere thought of being turned into a bird or a four-footed crea-

ture, or a stupid fish, of being liable to be snared by the fowler, trussed and roasted by the cook, or even simply fried in a pan, is odious to me. It would almost reconcile me to Bill Sykes, but for Huon of Bordeaux's ivory horn. That is my weak point. All my life long I have hated bores with a silent, deadly hate; but I have been powerless against them. I have met them on Vesuvius, in Regent Street, on the banks of Killarney, and they have ever prevailed against me. The bore is clad in mail, which is sword and dagger proof. But, oh! if I had that gold-mounted ivory horn which Oberon gave to Huon, and which set all sinners spinning, how I could settle the bore once for all! Suppose the bore comes and buzzes in my ear his foolish inanities concerning scenery, suppose he tells me about his children, or, what is just as likely, gives me the bill of fare of that capital dinner which he ate last year at the Frères Provençaux—instead of listening to him with secret pangs, instead of flying like a coward, I should just look at him quietly so, take my ivory horn, well secured to my side by a patent chain and Bramah hook, blow one blast, and leave him there spinning."

"You would not have the heart to do it, Mr. Templemore."

"Miss Courtenay, as there is no spot, no season, no hour sacred to the Bore, so none should save him from my revenge."

Dora looked at him wistfully. It was very pleasant to listen so to Mr. Templemore in that blooming garden, with the old brick château in the background; but it reminded her too strongly of the happy days when Doctor Richard and she used to vie in such fanciful paradoxes, and she would rather forget that time. She was to be the governess of Mr. Templemore's child, then let her sink into the position, with all its advantages and drawbacks, and be nothing else.

"But to return to Eva," resumed Mr. Temple-

more. "Since the sad day on which I lost her two little sisters, she has been too much indulged. She has faults, which she must outgrow, and so we must part for awhile. I shall leave her here under your care, and spend the winter in Deenah."

Dora started, yet she had wished to be nothing but the governess, and she had her wish. She need fear no dangerous sweetness in her lot. He was going to Deenah, and she would remain in Les Roches, almost alone with the child, in that large silent house. Yes, it was well, but how far the days in the Musée, and at Madame Bertrand's, now seemed—how remote! Something, too, there was in her mind which she could not help uttering.

"Mr. Templemore," she said, turning upon him with much earnestness, "you throw a great responsibility upon me."

"I do," he replied, gravely; "I feel I do. But I cannot leave the child to Miss Moore's care—nay, I will leave her to none save you. Eva loves you, and that love, joined to your happy nature, will do more to cure her of her faults than all my preaching. I have no fear for the result—none."

He spoke so confidently, that Dora felt silenced. She had but to submit. Her mother longed to stay in Les Roches, and to enjoy its comforts, and Mr. Templemore was bent on securing her. His will and her necessity were both too strong for liberty.

"Be it so," she said, a little wistfully.

But Mr. Templemore was too much pleased to see it. He looked perfectly happy at her final consent, and with a boyish eagerness which gave the ardor and the freshness of youth to all he said or did, he asked to show her at once the apartments he had prepared for her and Eva, who now joined them. The child was all alive with curiosity and excitement.

For the last month these mysterious rooms had been locked up, but now their secrets were going to be disclosed.

"And I shall know all about them," said Eva, exulting.

They entered a room on the ground-floor. Books, globes, maps, and a large slate in a frame, said plainly this was the school-room. Thence Eva ran into the next apartment.

"Oh! what a pretty room!" she cried; "is it for me?"

"No. This sitting-room is destined to the lady who will have the goodness to teach you."

Eva pouted, and Dora looked around her. Her future sitting-room was very graceful and elegant, and overlooked the flower-garden.

"This is a delightful apartment," she said, gayly; "but where is Eva's?"

Eva had already opened a door, and gone up a private staircase, which gave access from the sitting-room to the first-floor, and thence she eagerly summoned "Cousin Dora."

Dora went up and found three bedrooms—Eva's, the servant's, and her own. It was a handsome room—handsome, yet pleasant; but it seemed to Dora that it had a grave, sober aspect, which made it a very different apartment from the graceful room she now slept in, as Mr. Templemore's guest. The furniture was ancient, valuable indeed, but somewhat solemn-looking.

It was a corner room, and each of its two windows commanded a different prospect. Standing in the deep embrasure of one, you saw the gates of the château, and you looked down the long road delving deep into the city. That view Dora had from her present apartment. But this, her future room, if she became Eva's governess, had another window looking down into a quiet court, around which the château was built. In the centre rose a bubbling fountain, and though the aspect of all she saw was Norman, and not Germanic, Dora thought of Undine, when she had wedded Knight Hildebrand, and went home with him to his castle.

"When I feel foolish and unhappy I shall sit here and look at that court and fountain," she thought. "Even as that water is enclosed everywhere by cold stone walls, and must be satisfied with its life of domestic usefulness, so must I not repine or think myself ill-used because others go forth and wander in lovely spots and happy liberty, whilst I bend over books, teach a wayward child, and forget that I too might have had a story; and yet—yet oh! how can I forget you, my brother? How can I forget that if you had triumphed that man would have been poor, and would scarcely have hit upon me to be the governess of his child? How can I forget that, poor or rich, I should still have liked your conquered enemy, as I now cannot help liking your successful rival?"

"I don't like this," said Eva, peeping out of the window, and drawing back. "I don't like that court and the fountain; do you, Cousin Dora?"

"Oh! so much," replied Dora, with a smile. "This is mine, you know."

"Are you the governess, Cousin Dora?" cried Eva, amazed.

"Yes, Eva," answered Dora, with quiet pride; "I am the governess."

Thus it was decided. Miss Moore, on learning the news, or seeming to learn it, became wonderfully kind to Dora—so kind that Mrs. Courtenay was almost tempted to expostulate; but the quiet indifference of Miss Courtenay's manner soon silenced Miss Moore effectually. Coldness is the strongest weapon of defence. It is a shield of adamant, which nothing can pierce.

Great were the laments of Madame Bertrand on hearing that her lodgers meant to leave her; but great, too, was her amazement when Mrs. Courtenay informed her that Doctor Richard and the tenant of Les Roches were one. Her questions, Was Mr. Templemore very rich?—was he married?—and the shrewd

looks she gave Dora all the time, were very hard to bear.

"Yes," she thought, "all that might have been, but it must never be now—never."

Mrs. Luan went to England the very day after they left Les Roches. Her haste struck Dora, though she was so far from guessing its real motive, that, as they parted from her at the station, she said—

"Aunt, tell John I am very angry that he did not come to see us."

Mrs. Luan nodded. Yes, she would tell John—she would be sure to tell him.

"How odd aunt looked!" said Dora, as she walked home with her mother.

But Mrs. Courtenay had seen no particular oddity about Mrs. Luan; she always was odd, she said; and in the same breath she expressed her relief at leaving Madame Bertrand's mean little rooms, and going to inhabit the broad lofty chambers of Les Roches. But when Dora entered her room to bid her adieu, she looked at that quiet room with fond regret. She glanced at the prim Grisélidis, at the shabby furniture, at the gray church opposite, with the vine-leaves turning red beneath the cold breath of autumn winds, and she sighed. At the lame teacher's window she would not look, but she glanced up to Nanette's. The friendly beacon she had once seen shining there was gone forever, and with it had departed some bright visions, not of love or happiness, but of pleasant labor and sweet independence.

"My poor little fairy," she sadly thought, "I used to fancy you had brought me in luck in exchange for my milk and eggs; but I know now it was such luck as one reads of in story-books, where the gold turns into withered leaves, and the fairy palaces you sleep in at night are gone in the morning."

"Dora!" called her mother's voice in the outer room, "are you ready?"

"I am coming," answered Dora; but the

sparrows she used to feed, seeing her stand by the open window, went fluttering past, expecting their little pittance, and Dora would not disappoint them. She covered the window-ledge with bread, then, with a last look and a last sigh, she bade adieu to her room, and, for the first time in her life—to liberty.

And yet she looked happy and gay when she entered Les Roches. For, after all, hers was a happy lot, and she knew it. It was pleasant to be valued so highly by the father, and to be loved so dearly by the child. Even Fido's greeting was grateful to her; and then it was something surely that when one door closed upon her, another should open so readily and so soon. It was a relief to Mr. Templemore to read the brightness of all this in her face, as she arrived with her mother. Yes, he felt it keenly; he could trust his child whilst he was away to this fine joyous nature—so joyous, and that, too, Mr. Templemore knew, though not to what extent, because it was so brave.

And now Dora entered the school-room, and became queen absolute there. Eva's love for her governess partook of adoration. There had never been so perfect a being, in her opinion, as Dora. Miss Moore looked puzzled, and scarcely pleased, at this ardent affection; but Mr. Templemore was both amused and delighted, and took evident pleasure in watching and fostering its growth. He would jestingly ask Dora to tell him which of the two, Eva or Fido, loved her most, or could do best without her society. And when Dora would leave the room, or the garden, and Eva, howsoever absorbed, would soon look up from her book or her playthings, shake her curls, and ask, "Where is Cousin Dora?" Mr. Templemore would reply, with a smile:

"Come, Eva, I see it is Fido's affection which is the stronger of the two, after all; he never lets Cousin Dora out of his sight, prudent dog, and you do."



DORA AND THE CHILD BADE HIM ADIEU AT THE GATE.

"But Fido does not love Cousin Dora half so much as I do," Eva would cry, in hot indignation; and throwing down her book or her doll, she would go in pursuit of this much-loved cousin, to Mr. Templemore's evident satisfaction.

Mrs. Courtenay put only one construction upon all this, and felt both amazed and indignant when Mr. Templemore suddenly went away one morning. Before going he spoke to Dora.

"You have bewitched Eva," he said, with a kind smile, "so I need only ask you to go on with that magic, the secret of which I will not attempt to fathom. I shall only trouble you with two requests: be so good as to teach Eva to wait on herself as much as possible, and not to grow up into a helpless young lady; also, if she should be unwell, to send for Doctor Le-Roux first, then to telegraph to me. The rest I leave to you; and now, before we part, forgive me to have laid this task upon you—I sometimes feel I have been selfish!"

"How so?" composedly asked Dora. "I really could not expect a better situation than that I have in your family, Mr. Templemore."

"Pray do not talk of it as a situation," he said, looking slightly disturbed.

"What else is it?" she replied, with a smile of quiet pride. "Of course you do not look upon me merely as a person to whom you give a certain amount of money—nor do I think of myself merely as one who receives it; but for all that, Mr. Templemore, I am the governess of your child, and I am paid for being so."

Mr. Templemore's dark cheek flushed, and he bit his lip, but he said nothing.

"I hope you are not displeased with my frankness?" composedly resumed Dora, who saw very well that he was.

"Oh! not at all," replied Mr. Templemore, but he thought: "Miss Courtenay is a proud woman—a very proud woman!"

And now it was time for him to go. He would not let Eva accompany him to the station, Dora and the child bade him adieu at the gates of Les Roches. The day was bleak and very dreary—such, at least, it seemed to Dora, as she gave him her hand, and wished him a happy journey. But if the sweet sunshine of spring had been in the sky, Mr. Templemore could not have looked brighter and more genial than he looked as he bade them farewell. He kissed Eva two or three times, indeed, and with evident grief, but grief under which seemed to flow a strong current of joy. Dora stood and looked at the carriage which bore him away, like one in a dream. She felt no wish to lament his departure, no temptation to regret his presence, but there fell a coldness upon her like that of a shadow which suddenly shuts out a strong sun. She felt both lone and chill, and turned back to the house in silence, till Eva's sobs and tears roused her to the effort of consoling the child.

But Eva's grief was a childish grief—it did not last. When she had got all the comfort she could out of Dora, she raised her head from her young governess's shoulder, dried her tears, looked about her, and said, with a little tremulous sigh,

"Cousin Dora, I think I shall go to aunt now."

"Very well, my dear, do so."

She put down the child, who jumped lightly on the floor, shook her dark curls, and with them, no doubt, some portion of her sorrow; then opened the door of the school-room, slipped out, and left Dora alone.

She could not help going back to the past, and to some of the dreams by which that past had been haunted. She could not help comparing the romance of life with that of reality. How fair a beginning she had had! She had read novels very like it. A rich man in disguise discovers a poor girl in some obscure

nook, and removes every thorn from her path. He holds a magic wand, and life becomes sweet and easy before the unconscious maiden. Then, having won her heart, unaided by the prestige of wealth and rank, he takes her some day to a noble dwelling, and says, "'Tis mine." How pretty! And it was her story. That pleasing commencement she had had, and to make its romance more complete, the rich man in disguise was a sort of feudal enemy. But alas! the fair ending of the tale was wanted.

"Life is not a ballad or a novel, after all," thought Dora, amused at her own disappointment, and glancing round at the maps and globes, which showed her how wide a gap lay there between the first and the last pages of her book; "the rich man is very kind, but it is not a wife he wants, 'tis a governess. He has a foolish sister-in-law, whom he cannot trust his child with, and as the poor girl is a lady, and cheerful, and can teach what she knows, he is pleased to have her with his little daughter, whilst he goes and spends the winter in a house which is his, but might have been her brother's. That is life, and that is why, too, biography is so disappointing. The first pages are always full of wonderful promise, but the last have lost the charm; the beauty of the tale departs with youth, and returns no more."

Here a black-and-tan paw, gently scratching Dora's knee, drew her attention. She looked down smiling, and saw a pair of full bright eyes mutely begging for a lap.

"Yes, Fido, you shall be petted," she said, taking him up; and as Fido luxuriously made a ball of himself, and soon snored with pleasure, Dora thought, "God bless him!—he has a good kind heart. It was like him to cheer a dying woman by removing this sad thought from her mind. She died, knowing that the little creature who loved her would not be forsaken. God bless him! he was kind to me

too. I am sure it made him happy to see me drawing at the Musée, and thinking myself a bit of a genius. I can remember many a smile and many a look in which, if I had read them rightly, I might have detected the pure, heartfelt joy of a good man. I can pay him back now, and I will. I will be happy, and I will be cheerful—were it only for his child's sake."

The opportunity for fulfilling this resolve came almost immediately. The door opened, and Eva entered the room, with a sad, long face.

"Cousin Dora," she said, with a profound sigh, "aunt is busy, and—and I am very miserable."

Miserable! Dora laughed the declaration to scorn. Miserable!—why, Mr. Templemore, if he knew it, would be quite angry. Besides, was he not coming back? Miserable!—she would not hear of such a thing. But, unfortunately, Eva thought herself bound to be miserable, and Dora soon found out that she owed this idea to Miss Moore, who had taken some pains to impress on the child that she must in duty make herself unhappy, because of her father's departure. Dora did not contradict openly—there was no need to do so—but she swept the morbid fancy away; then, putting Fido on his cushion, she sat down to the piano, and began to play; whilst Eva so far forgot her grief as to dance, waving her arms as she had seen little girls do in pantomimes, and making some erratic and abortive attempts to stand upon one toe. As she was in that picturesque attitude, the door opened, and Mrs. Courtenay entered the room. She, too, came to be miserable, for she thought Dora very ill-used by Mr. Templemore; but on seeing Eva thus dancing to her daughter's music, she looked so bewildered, that Dora, who had turned round, asked with a smile:

"What is it, mamma?"

"I am glad you are both so cheerful,"

replied Mrs. Courtenay, still looking bewildered.

"Yes, we are cheerful," said Dora, with a bright, proud smile, "and we mean to go on being cheerful, too, mamma."

Mrs. Courtenay's countenance beamed again on hearing this.

"My dear, I am *so* glad!" she exclaimed, raising her voice—"so glad!"

Dora laughed, and turned back to the piano, and Eva waved her arms, again and again stood on her toe, whilst Mrs. Courtenay uttered little screams of delight, and Miss Moore, who heard these doings from afar, felt shocked and scandalized.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TIME had passed, and brought few changes in Dora's life. She had done with Eva one evening, and stole up to her own room, as she often did at that hour. It was very cold, but a bright moon shone in the wintry sky, and standing in the deep recess of her window, Dora looked at the sharp icicles which hung from the stone angles of the fountain in the court.

"So am I," thought Dora.

She did not feel dull, she did not feel unhappy, but she felt torpid like that frozen water.

"My dear, here is a letter for you," said her mother, coming in.

Dora turned round quickly; John Luan had written a week ago, the letter might be from Mr. Templemore. It was from him—a friendly letter, as usual, and enclosing a check.

"My quarter's salary," she said.

"How nice!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay; "and then that pretty English maid Mr. Templemore sent for you and Eva. Dora, you had a fairy for your godmother."

"Had I!" asked Dora; for memory flew back with a sort of passion to Madame Ber-

trand's rooms, and the old church, with its garden high up in the buttresses, to the Musée, with its pictures, and to long happy evenings, which must return no more. "Have I not buried my dead yet?" she thought, scorning her own weakness.

"My dear, you will tear that cheek," uneasily said Mrs. Courtenay, as she saw her daughter crushing the paper in her little nervous hand, with unconscious force.

Dora laughed, and who that heard her girlish laugh would have guessed how much strength and how much pride lay within its clear ringing sound?

"Are you coming to the drawing-room?" resumed Mrs. Courtenay; "poor Miss Moore does prose so when we are alone."

"I shall join you presently," said Dora, cheerfully, "but I must go down and look at some drawings first. I shall not be long," she added, gayly, on seeing Mrs. Courtenay's blank face.

She went at once, and on her way down she met that pretty English maid, whose presence was, in Mrs. Courtenay's opinion, one of the glories of her daughter's lot.

Fanny curtsied, and stood by respectfully whilst Miss Courtenay passed.

"Fanny is very civil and very pretty, and I have not a fault to find with her," thought Dora, looking at the girl's blooming face and smiling blue eyes; "but I suppose I am hard to please, for I do not like Fanny, and would rather be without her."

Mr. Templemore, before leaving, had placed his library at Dora's disposal, and she had spent some pleasant hours with its silent tenants. But now she was not inclined for a book, she wanted something more vivid, something to charm the eye as well as to feed the mind, and she found it in one of Mr. Templemore's many portfolios. The hours Dora spent thus were very happy hours in their way. Surrounded by mementoes of Mr. Tem-

plemore, she could not help thinking of him now and then; but the old illusions, the old friendship even, she forgot, or thought that she did forget. She might be mistaken. Her self-subjection was not, perhaps, so complete as she imagined it to be—but she was far too proud to be unhappy.

Perhaps love does not make its victims so very wretched, after all. Perhaps it is rather a state of mild and bearable suffering than one of distracting pain. There are many reasons why the patient's pangs should be concealed; and when they are revealed, it is generally because they have become intolerable. It is then that the world sees despair, and the agony of grief, and draws its hasty conclusions concerning the tragic nature of love. We may be sure there are many calm lulls to that sorrow, many hours when it is forgotten, and life and its blessings are prized in their fullness. Love in itself can never be a curse; though it may be in love's destiny, and no doubt is to lead to some of the sharpest torments which a human being can experience. But when there is and can be no hope, there can be no acute suffering, and so it was with Dora. So she now lingered over a view of Pompeii, and as she looked at the lone and desolate streets and roofless houses, and listened to the stormy wind blowing around Les Roches, she thought how time with the same resistless force had swept away man and his generations from the dead city. "Yes," she said to her own thoughts, "we are before that mighty conqueror as dried leaves on the path of a strong gust, and surely it is impossible to think of these things, and indulge in vain illusions or dangerous reverie."

Dora felt very calm just then, full of philosophy and of that wisdom which comes from thought, and has not stood the test of experience. The wind was strong, as we said, and it did not let her hear the wheels of a carriage on the gravelled path outside. She

did not hear unaccustomed sounds in the house at that hour, she heard nothing till the door of the room in which she sat opened, and Mrs. Luan stood before her.

"Aunt!" cried Dora, starting to her feet in much surprise. "Is it really you?—are you really come?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Luan, nodding; "Mr. Templemore asked me. He knew it would please you, he said."

"How kind!" exclaimed Dora in glad surprise. "Do you stay long, aunt? Is John coming?"

"No," shortly replied Mrs. Luan. "Mr. Templemore did not ask him."

"Of course not," said Dora with a gay laugh; "but he could go to Madame Bertrand, you know, and I long to see John again."

"And Mr. Templemore," said her aunt, "when is he coming?"

"Really, aunt, I don't know;" and her face, bright as sunshine, seemed to add, "Really, I don't care."

Mrs. Luan's brain was not a clear one. A dreadful fear now seized her. Had Dora's heart turned the wrong way? She gave her so strange and moody a look, that her niece was startled.

"Aunt, what is it?"

"Nothing, but I wish I had not lost the letter—Mr. Templemore's letter; it was beautiful—and all about you."

Dora's deep blush did not speak much in favor of poor John; and Mrs. Luan, whom her one idea could render clear-sighted, read its meaning.

"I must go and see Miss Moore now," she said, prudently leaving Dora to the powerful auxiliary of her own thoughts. "Will you come?"

"When I have put away this portfolio," answered Dora.

But she did not follow her aunt at once.

She stood with a smile on her lips, and a happy light in her eyes, forgetting the easy wisdom of five minutes back. Ah! what a thing is the present moment, that subtle portion of time which is either past or future, and which is gone before we can say 'tis here. In vain Dora had read and looked. Neither book nor picture now gave her their lesson, or yielded her their homily. In vain they had told her how generations had come and gone, how creeds had changed, how the sun of some nations had set in the darkness of an eternal night, and that of other nations had arisen and reached its meridian glorious and splendid—there was something stronger than it all in the heart of the dreaming girl.

"What could there be in that lost letter?" she thought, as she closed the door of the study behind her.

She stood in the darkness of a narrow passage, but thence she could see the square stone hall brightly lit, and the broad staircase. Suddenly the front door opened, and Jacques, the servant, showed in a tall handsome young man. For one moment Dora remained amazed and mute, the next she eagerly came forward.

"John!" she said, joyfully; "John Luan!"

He turned round quickly and took her extended hand, and looked at her with a happy, beaming face.

"God bless you!" he said; then he added, "you are as pretty as ever."

"Of course I am," gayly answered Dora. "But what a cheat aunt is to say you were not coming!"

John Luan changed color, and looked sobered at once.

"Is my mother here?" he asked.

"She has just arrived, and is up-stairs with mamma and Miss Moore. Did you not travel together?"

"No," sulkily replied John. Before Dora could make any comment, a door above opened, and Mrs. Luan, who had probably heard

her son's voice, appeared at the head of the staircase.

There was a moment's silence, and during that interval, brief though it was, Dora saw and guessed much. She saw the brightness which her aspect had called up pass away from John's face, and a strange sullen likeness to his mother appear there in its stead—a likeness which grew deeper and stronger as Mrs. Luan and he exchanged looks. She saw this, and she guessed that mother and son had deceived each other; though how far the deceit had been carried—how John had said he was going to Scotland, and Mrs. Luan that she was going to Dublin; how John had come to ask her to become his wife, and Mrs. Luan to prevent her from consenting; and, above all, how she had come to Les Roches without the slightest invitation from its master, Dora could not divine. She had always thought that the obstacle to John's suit rested with herself; she had never suspected that it lay with Mrs. Luan.

"And did each of you not know that the other was coming?" she could not help exclaiming.

"Come, come, I see we have caught and surprised you," gayly replied John Luan, recovering his composure. "And is aunt caught too! Where is aunt?"

"Why, John, I thought you were in Scotland!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay's voice upstairs; "what a shame of Mrs. Luan to impose upon me so!"

John laughed, and went up to Mrs. Courtenay, who, in the same breath, introduced him to Miss Moore, and informed him that he would be delighted at Madame Bertrand's, who was the dearest old thing, and would take such care of him. John's reply concerning the shortness of his stay, and the advantages of hotels, did not reach Dora. She did not believe that this was a concerted plan between John and his mother, and she stood

amazed and perplexed at the foot of the staircase, with her hand on the banisters, and her eyes downcast. On looking up, at length, she saw Mrs. Luan standing alone, almost in the same attitude as herself. Dora looked at her steadily as she went up the staircase; but Mrs. Luan never moved nor raised her sullen eyes. "How moody she looks!" thought Dora.

"Aunt," she said, on reaching her, and gently touching her hand as she spoke, "why did not John tell you he was coming?—and why also did you not tell him?"

Mrs. Luan looked up, and there was a confusion in her gaze which did not seem to come from Dora's question—the confusion of a dull mind, to which even light and clear matters appear perplexed and strange.

"He can't stay," was her only answer; "he can't afford it, you know."

There was nothing else to be got from her. Dora saw it, and thought, "Poor John, he came to see me, and his mother tells me he cannot afford to marry; as if I did not know it—and as if I wanted him!" This much she understood—this much and no more.

It was quite true that John could not stay; his time was not his own—he too said so. He was very full of his prospects, for he had been promised an appointment of a hundred a year, which he seemed to consider a small fortune. He was to be the medical attendant of a wonderful society for the improvement, or the benefit, or the perplexity of young women; he was to have a cottage and a garden, and plenty of time, for the young women were only to be invalids when they could not help it; so that, as every one else in the neighborhood was, on the contrary, to be in delicate health, Doctor John Luan would enjoy every opportunity of establishing a large practice, and of earning a handsome income. He seemed so sure of all this, he looked so handsome with his blue eyes and his florid complexion, there

was something so young and yet so perfectly manly about him, that Miss Moore, spite Dora's reserved manner, had no doubt but John Luan was a favored admirer. How could he be otherwise? Surely Miss Courtenay never thought she could do better!

Some vague suspicion of the same kind lurked in Mrs. Luan's mind. Either she was not quite convinced of Dora's secret liking for Mr. Templemore, or she doubted its depth and durability, for she never left her son's side. But spite all her watching, John found means to see Dora alone. He would not mind her gravity, or read its meaning. He knew she did not love him, for love gives keenness even to the dull; but John was not exacting or romantic; let Dora marry him, or promise to marry him some day, and he was content. He was matter-of-fact in love, as in most things, and considered that to have the woman he was fond of, was the great point in matrimony. "The rest will come with time," was his philosophic conclusion. And as he meant to be kind, affectionate, and devoted, he may be excused if he was also easily satisfied.

"I wish I could like him," thought Dora, who knew better than John himself how good, how kind, how true was her cousin. But she could not, it was not in her power, and never had lover's wooing less chance of success than John Luan's, when he suddenly came upon her the next morning in the garden. The day was mild and gray. One of the last days of winter, with something of spring softness in the air. John found Dora in the flower-garden, near the house, with Eva trundling her hoop. Mrs. Luan, unconscious of her danger, was in the dining-room at the other end of the château.

Dora availed herself of the opportunity to urge on John a matter which had long lurked in her mind, and which the preceding day's occurrence had brought back very forcibly.

"John," she said, "how has aunt been whilst she was with you?"

John stared, for his mother enjoyed perfect health.

"Why, well, of course," he answered.

Dora hesitated.

"You were never struck with anything?" she asked.

"Struck with what?"

"With any oddity or peculiarity?"

John stared again. His mother had always been peculiar.

"In short," said Dora, with a strong effort, "you have no fear that her mind is at all affected?"

If John could have been angry with Dora, he would have been angry then. He was so indignant, and so much pained, too, that his cousin stammered an excuse. This pacified him at once.

"You must think nothing of the kind," he said, good-humoredly; "and you must listen to what I have to say, please. I have liked you all my life. * Whilst you had money I was silent. We are both poor—I can speak. You know my position. I can afford to marry now. Will you share my lot?"

"No, John, thank you," replied Dora, with a grave smile. "I like you dearly, but not as I should like you for that."

But John, who had expected this, would not be disheartened, and he said so.

"No, Dora, I will not take your denial. I have thought of it years, and I am sure I could make you happy—very happy! I knew you would say no, but I believed, and still believe, that you will end by saying yes!"

He spoke resolutely, and Dora looked at him in perplexity. Was John a prophet? Was she really to conquer the present so far as to become, some day, the wife of the good-humored friend and cousin she now gazed on? The prospect almost appalled her. Yet it might be. She, too, might—like many a girl

before her—reject her first lover, then turn back to him, and be glad of the refuge of that true, faithful heart. But integrity would not allow her to indulge John Luan in an illusion which, whilst it bound him, would leave her free, and she said so.

"And what need you care if I do not mind it?" he answered, impatiently. "I tell you stranger things than this have come to pass. Just tell me if it be not strange that you, Mr. Courtenay's niece, and Paul Courtenay's sister, should now be governess to Mr. Templemore's child? Did you not detest the man's name? Did you not always vow that, if poverty struck you, you would be a seamstress, and not a dependant in a rich man's house? And yet here you are, to all seeming pleased and happy in your position. According to your account, Mr. Templemore is white as snow, and we were to blame—not he. That little girl dotes on you, and you dote on her, and you look very happy and contented—all of which, if I did not see it, I should deem incredible. Yet so it is. Why, then, tell me that I must not hope?"

Dora, who had turned red and pale repeatedly whilst he spoke, felt silenced by his blunt and not unreasonable argument. Yet she ventured on one objection.

"I am happy here, as you say, John; and as my task is one which will take years, why should I leave it?"

"It is a long lane that has no turning!" replied John, a little sulkily.

Again Dora felt silenced, and Eva, by coming up, and leaving her governess no more, did not allow either to renew the subject. John, indeed, no more cared to speak further than Dora to hear him. He had said his say, and not being an eloquent man, he could add nothing to his blunt wooing. It satisfied him that Dora should know he loved her, and wished to marry her. The rest would come. Her rejection he would not consider as final. He was his mother's son in many things—in

obstinacy, not to say stubbornness, as well as in abrupt, inelegant speech. And Dora would rather not pursue a theme which grated on her ear like a discordant note in music. She thought highly of her cousin, she was sure of his affection, but she also felt that to be loved thus could never make her happy. She required that something more which, to exacting youth, is like the crown of love, the grace, the poetry, the touch of romance, which must exist, whether they be merely in a girl's feelings, or really in the man she loves.

John could waken no admiration, no enthusiasm in her heart; he appealed to none of these faculties which attend on every strong feeling, and deepen its intensity, or add to its force. He was plain John Luan to her, and with a sigh Dora felt he must remain so; her cousin, her early friend, but no more. She had felt almost certain of it before he spoke—she was sure without a doubt now that he had spoken. The man who, in so deep and urgent a matter, could find no more persuasive accents than poor John had found to plead his cause, could never rule her heart. The fault might be hers, but the fact remained, and it was clear and strong, and not to be disputed or resisted.

With such feelings upon her, Dora welcomed the child's presence as a Godsend; she was glad even when Mrs. Luan came down. That lady, indeed, looked confounded on seeing her son with Dora, but on perceiving that Eva was with them too, her brow cleared; nothing could have taken place, and lest anything should take place she left them no more. Her task of watchfulness was soon over. John went away that same afternoon, and he bade Dora adieu in Les Roches, and his mother accompanied him to the station, and came back looking sulkily triumphant, as was her wont whenever she had achieved some little success.

There is always something momentous to a

young girl in an offer of marriage, whatever may be her feelings toward the man by whom it has been made. It almost always marks a crisis in the story of her life; it is an epoch in her youth, toward which she looks back sometimes with amusement, sometimes, too, with regret, but which she cannot well forget. In vain Dora had known for years that she was dear to John Luan's heart, in vain her only source of wonder was that he had taken so long to speak, in vain too his wooing had been both plain and brief, something of that wooing, such as it was, remained behind him when he was gone, and made Les Roches seem cold and dull. She did not repent her refusal, she could not believe she ever should regret it, and yet she felt that one of her chances of happiness as a woman was gone. John Luan was not the right one, but it is not always the right one who comes in life, he often goes elsewhere or he dies early, or lives unwedded, or has a wife and three children when one sees him first; in short, even a beauty has and can have but a certain amount of lovers, and even a beauty must make up her mind to the sad and unpleasant fact that amongst these the right one may never be. Some secret voice told Dora this, and though she was too brave and proud to fear the lonely life which would probably be her lot, she was too honest not to feel that if she could so far have conquered her feelings it might have been well for her to have become John Luan's wife.

Some gravity, therefore, appeared on her countenance, and Mrs. Luan, unaccustomed to see such a sign there, grew uneasy, and watched her niece both closely and stealthily. But if Dora spoke less than usual on the day that followed John Luan's departure—if she looked, as she was, abstracted and thoughtful, the little cloud soon passed away, the brightness returned, the happy, smiling eyes got back their light, and the rosy cheek its bloom.

"My dear, how well you look!" Mrs. Courtenay said, admiringly.

"Because I am well," was the gay reply—"well and happy."

She felt so well and so light, that she wondered at it herself, and never guessed the cause. There is a great, a powerful renovator, who visits us every year, giving back to the old the dreams of youth, and to the young sweet and restless illusions—one whose breath clears the sullen winter sky, whose steps cover the green earth with flowers, whose mere aspect is as the beauty of lost paradise—Spring, the youth of nature, the divine messenger of love, the enchanting promise of joys that never come in their fulness. It was not in Dora's power to resist the voice of this sweet deluder. He came one day in a soft shower, and birds began to sing, and buds broke forth into foliage on the boughs. Violets blushed in the shade, cowslips and primroses followed the cold-looking snowdrop. The gardener let in the sun to the fair captives in the green-house, and every thing about Les Roches looked sweet and enchanting.

If the little world around Mr. Templemore's château was restricted in extent, it was full of beauty. A narrow but pleasant river flowed through it with a soft murmur, tall trees grew on its banks, and bent over it with sylvan grace; reeds, grasses abounded there. Farther on a path wound in the shade, and here, near the rocks and the waterfall, was the spot which Dora loved. The little green recess, with many a tangled weed, and many a trailing ivy-bough, in which stood the stone bench, old and gray. A hundred years and more had that bench stood there. It had seen the *ancien régime*, and gay gentlemen, and powdered ladies, with long trailing silk skirts; it had heard the love-making of two or three generations. Mademoiselle Seudéry's Clélie had been forgotten upon it, then Florian's pastorals, then the grim *Moniteur* of the stern Republic and

Napoleonic bulletins of wonderful victories. And, ancient though it was, its days were not numbered yet. More love, more reading, more pleasant or fond converse it was yet to know, whilst the trees gave it their shade, and parted in a bright view of the sunlit château on its airy height.

On the bench Dora and Eva sat, tired with wandering, one delicious afternoon. The child rolled herself up in a ball, and leaned against her young governess. She looked at the château through half-shut eyes, and talked in the dreamy, rambling fashion of imaginative children. Dora heard, but did not listen. Now and then, indeed, she caught something about Fanny, and Jacques, and Minna, all mingling together in strange confusion, but her thoughts were far away. This spring day had sent her back to other springs already lost and gone, young though she still was, and their pale spectres and faded verdure came back to her with mingled joy and sorrow in their aspect.

"Oh! if one could forget!" she thought, with something like passion—"if one could but forget!"

A cry and a bound from Eva roused her. She started, and looking up, saw the child in her father's arms.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DORA was surprised, and scarcely felt more than surprise. Perhaps the image of Paul had been too recently with her for Paul's sister to forget at once that this was her lost brother's rival. Perhaps absence and time had not been ineffectual. With something like triumph she returned Mr. Templemore's greeting, and thought, as she looked at him, and felt her own coldness,

"I am cured!—I am well!"

"How well you both look!" he said, glancing from her to Eva.

"And I know so many things!" cried Eva, ardently.

"Do you?—well, I hope your temper is improved."

"But Eva has a very good temper," seriously said Dora.

He did not reply, but looked at Eva, who shook her curls, and seemed unconscious, as children can seem when it suits their purpose, this being one of those weapons of defence with which we are all provided, from the beetle upward. Once more Mr. Templemore bestowed his attention upon Dora; he was full of courteous inquiries, and still rejoicing at her calmness, and thinking, "Is it so?—is it really so soon over?" she heard him with grateful composure. Little did Dora suspect that Mr. Templemore was full of resentment and wonder, in which she had some slight share. Mrs. Luan happened to be the first person he had seen on entering Les Roches. He found her established in his house as a guest. Had she come self-invited? It seemed unlikely. Miss Moore disliked her—he knew it. Had Dora—had Mrs. Courtenay taken so great a liberty? He did not wish to question, still less to make Mrs. Luan feel that she was no welcome visitor. She was a low-browed, sulky woman, but she was Dora's aunt, and the late Mrs. Courtenay's sister, and for a while, at least, he must endure this unbidden guest, and unless chance favored him, not even know through whom she had been forced upon him. But this was not Mr. Templemore's only cause of annoyance. Miss Moore had written to him and told him of John Luan's visit, and, according to her account, the young man was a poor but favored admirer. Was he therefore threatened with losing his governess, just when he felt least inclined to part with her? Of this, too, Mr. Templemore betrayed nothing. He spoke very pleasantly, as was his wont, and gave Dora some good news—there was a chance

of the Redmore Mines paying dividends again.

"It is only a chance," he added, smiling; "but even a chance of money has something golden and pleasant about it."

They parted on reaching the house. Dora went up to her room, and found her mother waiting for her.

"Well?" she said, excitedly.

"There is a chance of the Redmore Mines paying dividends."

"Is there?—how nice! And Mr. Templemore?"

"He is coming to the school-room this evening, to see how Eva has got on."

And as she said this, Dora's grave look, added so plainly, "I am the governess, you know," that her mother's face fell a little, spite the news of the Redmore Mines. "Yes, I am the governess," thought Dora, as she sat with Eva in the school-room, waiting for Mr. Templemore; "let us hope my patron will be satisfied."

The evening was mild, the window was open, and through it the eye caught a dark glimpse of the flower-garden, and beyond it of the trees by which it was enclosed. The scent of a bed of wall-flowers rose strongly on the air, and a long silver streak of moonlight came into the room, and fell on that part of the floor which the light of the lamp did not reach.

"There's papa!" cried Eva, joyously; "I smell his cigar. Now, what will you question me in?" she added, eagerly, as Mr. Templemore entered the room; "history, geography—"

"You overpower me," he interrupted; "I am not learned, you know."

"I am," declared Eva, shaking her dark curls.

"Then I think I shall take you upon trust. It will spare us both trouble."

Eva looked so disappointed, that Mr. Temple-

more relented, asked to know the date of the Norman invasion, and had half a dozen centuries added to it by his little daughter. He laughed, but Dora blushed, and uttered a reproachful "Eva!"

"Dear Miss Courtenay, that is nothing," he said, gayly; "I consider dates a trifle in history. But, alas! for facts, who can get hold of them? I was reading about the gunpowder plot the other day. Well, it seems that wise King Jamie and his minister, Sir Edward Coke, took the trouble to garble and alter the written confessions of that wretched Guy Fawkes and his accomplices with their own royal and ministerial hands, and that account, thus altered, they published to the world, who was allowed to have none other. It is deplorably hard to get a true thing, and not more so in history than in anything else. I am not fond of snuff, but if I were, what should I feel on learning that guano is sold for it in London? The king and the tradesman are cheats, both of them, and what are we poor customers and students to do?"

But Eva did not like all this. "Do question me, papa," she urged; "I know geography—"

"No, I will have nothing to do with that. I am in the carping mood—let us stick to plain English, and try and not wander thence."

Accordingly, an examination beginning with the parts of speech, and ending with syntax, took place. It proved highly satisfactory.

"So far the child is all right, thanks to you, Miss Courtenay," said Mr. Templemore; "but," he added, with a sigh, "how shall we guard her against the perils of choice elocution on the one hand, or the equal dangers of slang on the other? I mean as she grows up to the critical age when maidens have to steer between this Charybdis and that Scylla. We must trust her to Providence, I suppose—poor little Eva! how she stares, unconscious of the snares lying before her! There, child,

that will do—go to bed and sleep—go to bed and sleep."

But he had to hear Eva's waltz, to praise it, to thank Dora, and pay her some compliments before he left. He went, though it was early yet; but of course he could not spend his evening with her. Yet it seemed hard he should go so early. Doctor Richard used to stay till it was eleven, and not think it late. "But then I was not the governess," thought Dora.

Yes, that was it—her position was changed, and, with all his courtesy, Mr. Templemore could not treat his daughter's governess as he had treated Miss Courtenay; he could not, in justice to her, spend a whole evening in the school-room, and indulge in her society, much as he liked it. The world and its laws and proprieties divided them not merely then and thus, but at every other time and in every other way. At the same time, if he left her thus early, it was to take an active interest in her welfare, which Dora would scarcely have appreciated had she known of it.

Mr. Templemore wanted to speak to Mrs. Luan about her son, and he had asked her to meet him in his study. She came, as stolid-looking as ever. Mr. Templemore declared his purpose at once.

"My dear madam," he said, kindly, "you must excuse my troubling you at so undue an hour, but I greatly wish to speak to you on a subject which interests us both. Is there not an attachment between your son and Miss Courtenay? If so, I shall only feel too happy to favor it by forwarding his views in life. Might I not, through my influence here with some of the companies in which I am a large shareholder, for instance, procure him some appointment which would enable him to marry?"

Mrs. Luan had listened to him thus far in mute consternation at this strange perversion of all her plans; but when she heard the omi-

nous word "marry," all her suppressed anger and fear broke forth.

"No, no!" she cried, aghast at the danger, "there is no attachment; and, please, you must not do that—you must not!"

"I hope I have not distressed you?" he said, gravely.

"No, no; but you must not!"

She was less excited, but still much moved. Mr. Templemore looked at her quietly, though keenly. "It is that sullen, stupid woman who opposes the marriage," he thought. But he felt silenced, and only renewed his apologies at his interference. Mrs. Luan heard him out, then rose to go. When she stood at the door she paused and looked back.

"John must not come any more," she said. "You will not bring him, will you?"

"Certainly not," he replied; and he thought—"What an idiot!"

Alas! how often we fling on others that reproach of folly; and if we but knew the truth, and read the future, how often we should be mute.

He had spoken gravely and positively, yet Mrs. Luan was disturbed. She did not want John to marry her niece. No appointment could reconcile her to the fact of Dora's penniless condition. If John got a good appointment, why, he should also get a wife with money, and not take one without it. So there was a heavier cloud of sulkiness on her brow than usually sat there when she went up to the drawing-room. She found Mrs. Courtenay seated before a table, with cards spread before her. Patience, rather neglected of late, had resumed its attractions on Mr. Templemore's return. She nodded significantly to Mrs. Luan, and said, with a profound assumption of mystery,

"I did it three times—for a wish—and three times I succeeded!"

Mrs. Luan did not answer, perhaps she did not even hear her. She had a magic more

certain than that of her credulous little sister-in-law, and she could rely upon it.

There is many a happy lull in the affairs of men; days follow days in delicious monotony, and one is so like the other, that, looking back upon them, they lose their separate existence, and blend in one calm image of the past. But of these serene intervals, history, public or private, can take no account, and it is a pity. For hence springs a strange look of unreality. Catastrophe comes quick on catastrophe. Empires seem to perish faster than we can read of their destruction, mighty revolutions are accomplished before we well know whence they sprang, and battle succeeds battle, till we grow callous, and read of thousands killed with happy equanimity.

In the history which deals with one human life we have the same effects and the same results. Existence there seems made up of keen sufferings or ecstatic joys; the medium world, in which even the most fortunate or the least happy must move now and then, vanishes from our view, lost in the dark shade or the strong light of the picture. It is so, and we cannot help it. The subtleness of daily life eludes us; its evanescent charm is one we never can secure in its fulness. Glimpses we may have; but glimpses are not the whole truth, that is beyond our reach, and ever remains thus, divine and unapproachable.

There came a great repose over Dora Courtenay's life about this time. It lasted one week—no more, but it was sweet, and she never forgot it. She saw little of Mr. Templemore, but that little sufficed her. His friendly and open manner, that said so plainly, "Friends we are—friend, and no more," did her good. It made her feel brave and strong, and at the same time secure in her strength. His society, also, broke on the dulness of her life. It gave food to thought, and yet it nursed up no fond and dangerous illusions.

"I know this will not last," she often

thought. "I know some change must come; but whilst it lasts I feel happy—is not that much?"

It was much indeed, very much; but the change, however, came more quickly than Dora had expected.

Mr. Templemore had joined her one evening in the garden. He never did so, and though Eva was with him, Dora felt intuitively that he had something particular to say. If such was the case, he began very wide the mark.

"Miss Courtenay," he said very gravely, "has it ever occurred to you to regret not having been born in antediluvian times?"

"Never," replied Dora, smiling, and she thought "he has nothing to say, after all; he is only going to indulge in one of his usual flights of faucy."

"Then let me inform you that I bitterly regret belonging to these degenerate days," resumed Mr. Templemore. "Now, do consider, Miss Courtenay, what delightful creatures there were formerly: lizards thirty feet long or so. Everything was on so grand a scale then! Think how entertaining it would be to see that light and graceful bird, the Epiornis, pick up a live crocodile and fly off with it! Such grand battles on land and sea there must have been, too. We have lost all that now."

"Thank Heaven!"

"No—no, I must convert you; Eva, run and get me the paper on the table in my study. I must show Miss Courtenay a drawing of the Epiornis."

Eva went readily, and Dora, looking at Mr. Templemore, thought:

"Now he is going to say it."

And she was right—he began at once.

"Dear Miss Courtenay, I have sent away Eva because I wish to say a few words to you out of her hearing. To begin at the very beginning: I am going to get married."

Dora felt stunned. She had suspected this; she had felt it coming on all along, and yet when it came it found her helpless. All her strength, all her bravery, yielded to that blow, and there ran through her such a thrill of pain that it made her turn sick and cold.

"I have been engaged for the last year," continued Mr. Templemore, "and I am almost ashamed to say that Eva has delayed my marriage all that time. She was very, very delicate then, and she took so violent a dislike, founded on jealousy, to the lady I was going to marry, that her health was endangered. Since then I have tried to conquer her unreasonable aversion—I have always failed; but she is strong and well now. I neither can nor will sacrifice my happiness, and that of another dearer by far than my own, to the caprices of a child. I have for the last half year weaned myself from her society, and accustomed her to live without me, and be happy. I hope that she will learn to bear with what is inevitable, and I must now ask you to use your influence over her, which is great, in order to teach her submission, should she be inclined to rebellion."

"I shall do my best," replied Dora, in a low voice.

Alas! she too needed that lesson.

"As yet Eva knows nothing," he resumed; "she does not know, for instance, that I was to marry Mrs. Logan."

He went on, but Dora heard no more. Mrs. Logan!—it was Florence—Florence Gale, her brother's faithless love, who was to marry her brother's happy rival! It was she! Oh! she could have raised her hands appealingly to heaven, and asked if this was just. She could have done it in the dreary bitterness of that hour.

He did not perceive her emotion—the grayness of the evening concealed it from his view. He went on talking, and after awhile Dora heard him again. She returned to that

sense of actual existence which had been suspended in her for a few moments. Again she saw the garden, and a starry sky, and again he stood by her, and his voice spoke and told her calmly what it was so hard to hear.

"Mrs. Logan and I are cousins—rather far removed, indeed, but cousins still. When I came home after my wife's death, I found her at her father's house near Deenah. Her husband had just died, and she looked such a child in her weeds. But you know her, Miss Courtenay—I need not tell you what a delightful, ingenuous creature she is. Apart from the affection I feel for her, it does me good to be near her. She takes ten years away from me. But I must not trust myself with that subject. Suffice it to say that we met daily, that we became strongly attached, and that but for my perverse little Eva, we should now be married. Mrs. Logan has endured the child's caprices with the patience of an angel; but I cannot allow this strange state of things to go on any longer, and—we are to be married next month."

"And what am I to do, Mr. Templemore?" asked Dora, after awhile.

"Will you kindly break the news to Eva to-morrow, and tell me how she has borne it? Not that it will make the least difference," headed, quickly; "but it will be a great relief to me if the child will only be reasonable and good."

Dora was silent. She felt too desolate and heart-sick to say a word.

"You have great influence over her," he resumed. "Will you kindly use it for this purpose, and also to prevent her, if this unfortunate dislike still exists, from displaying it to Mrs. Logan when she comes?"

"Here?" abruptly said Dora.

"Not here," he answered, "but near here. Her husband, poor fellow, died in a little villa down the road, which he bought two years ago. It was in coming to see Mrs. Logan that I was smitten with Les Roches, and took it on a long

lease for Eva's sake. It is in order to give her temper one more trial that Mrs. Logan is kindly coming. She will stay a month in her villa, then return to Ireland, where we are to be married. I have been preparing Deenah the whole winter, and I trust we shall have the pleasure of seeing you there some day, Miss Courtenay; but I dare say that my little Eva will have to remain here a long time yet."

It was plain, though he did not say so, that Mr. Templemore did not expect Eva's dislike of his bride to be conquered at once. But Dora did not think of that. She thought that when he had asked her to become Eva's governess, and given her mother a home, he had never contemplated that these two strangers should intrude on his family circle. Eva's jealousy was the key to the mystery. With Miss Moore to watch over her health, and Dora to educate her, he could marry, be happy with his young wife, and yet not feel that he had sacrificed his child entirely.

"He will visit Les Roches now and then," she thought, "and see Eva, as he could never see her if she were in a school, for instance; and when other children are born to him he will care less for her jealousy, and Eva must bear her fate, or be forever an exile from her father's house. Poor Eva! our case is pretty much alike!"

"Where are you?" cried Eva's voice at a little distance. "I cannot see you—and—"

"I am afraid," suggested her father, going toward her.

"Allow me to put a question, Mr. Templemore," said Dora; "when is Mrs. Logan coming?"

"To-morrow," he replied, hastily. "Well, Eva, did you find the Epiornis?"

"I did; but how can you see it?"

"By going in to look at it, of course."

They entered the school-room, where a lamp was burning with a mild radiance, and Mr. Templemore showed the print of the Epiornis

to Dora, and again wished he had been born in antediluvian times; and seemed so happy and so light-hearted, that Dora would have been very blind indeed if she had not known it was because Mrs. Logan was coming the next day. She was not jealous, she had no right to be jealous, and some natures are too proud to be jealous, but she suffered keenly. If it had been any woman but that one—the false, light mistress of her lost brother! But it was she, and Dora must a second time see manly love bestowed on that little bit of pretty flesh and blood, so brainless and so heartless. She must see it. She could not fly from her torment. It would meet her daily and hourly, till they left to get married, and Les Roches returned once more to its dulness and its silence.

All this Dora thought and felt, whilst Mr. Templemore, happy man, went on talking of the Epiornis, and indulging in flights of fancy, which made Eva laugh till she was tired.

“Poor Eva!” thought Dora, as she listened to her—“your trouble is yet to come.”

She felt for the child, and when Mr. Templemore left them at length, she resolved to tell her the news.

“She will sleep upon it,” she thought, “and waken with her grief half spent to-morrow; whereas, if I tell her in the morning, she will fret or sulk all day.”

Accordingly, Eva, instead of going to bed at once, was summoned to her governess’s room, and, unwonted familiarity, taken on her knee, and pressed to her breast in a tender, though silent embrace. Eva, far from guessing that these were tokens of coming calamity, felt delighted—not, to be quite frank, at the unusual fondness she received, but at a long-coveted and long-denied privilege—the entrance of Cousin Dora’s room. How beautiful looked that rather austere apartment to her childish eyes! The lofty, square bed, the old carved prie-dieu, the Spanish pictures of devo-

tion, all dimly visible by the light of a lamp placed on the toilet-table, impressed Eva. Through the open window the court, with other windows with lights in them, was partly visible, and in the stillness of the evening the little gurgling voice of the fountain, which household noises covered all day, could be distinctly heard.

“Eva,” began Dora, “I have something to tell you. I have news—good news,” she added, with a sigh—“Mrs. Logan is coming to-morrow.”

Eva looked very sulky.

“She is coming,” continued Dora, ignoring that look and its meaning, “and Mr. Templemore told me this evening that he was going to marry her. I hope you are glad, Eva, for of course this will add to his happiness.”

Eva showed neither grief nor gladness at the tidings, but she looked more sulky than ever. At length the truth came out with an impetuous burst of tears.

“I hate Mrs. Logan!”

“Hush!” said Dora, severely—“let me never hear such words again.”

Eva stood in great awe of her governess. She did not dare to persist in her declaration of hatred toward Mrs. Logan, but threw herself back upon weeping.

“There, there, that will do—I am not so very angry,” remarked poor Dora, with a sigh; “but you must be good, you know, and I shall expect you to behave unexceptionably to Mrs. Logan to-morrow.”

Eva made no promise, and Dora asked for none. She could not in her heart blame Eva for her dislike of Mrs. Logan; moreover, she knew her power over her pupil, and that she could insure external obedience at least to any reasonable command; perhaps she scarcely cared to ask for more. This matter being over much more quickly than Dora had expected, she rang for Fanny, gave Eva to her care, and remained alone.

"I suppose there are plenty of women in my case," she thought, with a sigh, "only they do as I do—they keep their secret, and they bear with their fate."

She sat, as Eva had left her, leaning back in her chair, and listening to the murmur of the fountain below. She felt languid and listless, rather than very wretched; for, after all, we must endure our sorrows, and fight our battles. We cannot desert that grim captain, Grief, and enlist under other colors. Dora's present mood dealt not so much with Mr. Templemore as with that past which he had so darkly influenced. She thought of Paul, and his lost love, and his early death; she thought of the light, faithless creature who had urged him on to exertions beyond his strength, then quietly and carelessly put him by. She went over that sad story, and brought to life that buried past, and something between bitterness and sorrow filled her heart as this question rose within her:

"Why are the prizes of life ever granted to some, and ever denied to others?"

Dora Courtenay was in one of those moods when we forget time, and take no account of its course. She sat thus, dreaming very sadly, and very uselessly, when her door opened, and Mrs. Luan entered the room. She locked the door, came up to her niece, and stood before her speechless, but her sallow face inflamed with passion.

"Dora," she at length stammered, "is it true?—is it?"

"What?" asked Dora, doubtfully.

"Is he going to marry her?—that silly black-eyed chit—is he?"

"Why, how can you know that?" asked Dora, much startled.

"You have told Eva—she said it to Fanny—I heard them."

Dora had sometimes thought that her sullen, silent aunt went about the house eavesdropping—she was sure of it now. She blushed

with displeasure and shame, and could not help exclaiming,

"Oh! aunt, how could you do that?—how could you?"

"How dare he tell you?" asked Mrs. Luan, stamping her feet and clenching her hands in her passion; "how dare he? He shall never marry her!" she added, taking off her cap and flinging it on Dora's bed; "never! Do you think I have forgotten how she treated Paul? I say, he shall never marry her!"

As idle as the wind which now rose and swept around the house sounded this threat in Dora's ear. But she shut the window, for her aunt might be heard, and this was surely to be avoided, if it were possible.

"Dear aunt," she said, soothingly, "what is it to us whom he marries? Our position here is not changed. She is his cousin, and they have been long attached; we have no sort of right to object to his choice."

She spoke kindly, as if Mrs. Luan were a child who required soothing; and Mrs. Luan let her speak, and neither revolted nor remonstrated. Her useless passion was over, and she was already thinking how to act. Dora easily persuaded her to go to her room, and even accompanied her to the door. "Poor aunt!" she thought, as she came back to her own apartment; "even she cannot forget Paul and his wrongs. Ah! it is hard!—very hard!"

It was hard, and in her prayers that night Dora put up a petition, asking that she might not dwell on the past to the verge of sin.

Whilst she strove and wished to forget, Mrs. Luan, who, to do her justice, had about as much religion as an atheist—not that she knew it, poor soul! but her mind was so constituted—sat in her room meditating on her plans. Oh! if Dora—if any one in that house could have known how far these plans of that sullen, silent woman extended! She had a

ruthless nature, made for conflict, and stopping at nothing that could insure success. She now set herself to rob a woman of her happiness, a man of his liberty, and both of peace, as calmly as if she had been a great nation making war on a savage tribe, or annoying a neighbor. With the serenity of the just, she said to herself that hers was a good, a praiseworthy, a rightful course. Was she not saving her son from a poor marriage, providing handsomely for her niece, and giving Mr. Templemore a good, amiable, and accomplished wife, a hundred-fold above that silly Florence Gale, with her black eyes! True, Mr. Templemore loved the one, and not the other; but Mrs. Luan knew best what was good for him, and took upon herself the part of Providence, with the calmness of conscious rectitude, and some of the insolence of long impunity.

What she did, or rather what she resolved to do, as she sat thus alone that evening, brooding over the future, hundreds do daily, and with the same mental hypocrisy. Hear them when they are detected. Their motives were the loftiest and the purest. They were, or meant to be, benefactors of humanity, and especially of that portion of it which they selected for injury. Who of them confesses that greed, ambition, or revenge, was the real motive? Not one. And so, whilst Dora slept, her aunt sat and planned for her good.

CHAPTER XXV.

MRS. LOGAN arrived whilst Dora was in the garden with Eva and Fido. Miss Moore came to them all breathless with the news. She had been suffering from a secret the whole winter, and her relief was commensurate with the past infliction. So whilst Eva trundled her hoop, and looked unconscious, Dora listened patiently to the praises of Florence Gale.

"The only woman whom I could endure to see in my dear lost sister's place," emphatically said Miss Moore, whose regard for Eva's future step-mother was much enhanced by Eva's dislike of her, and the necessity it created of her prolonged guardianship. "And so pretty," she continued; "you will admire her so, Miss Courtenay."

"I know Mrs. Logan, and have known her for years," composedly said Dora.

If she had declared that she was on terms of intimacy with a Royal Highness, Miss Moore could scarcely have looked more amazed than she now did; but something in Dora's tone sobered her enthusiasm, for after awhile she left Eva's governess to her own thoughts.

Eva still looked unconscious—perhaps she had not minded her aunt's discourse; perhaps she wished to forget all about Mrs. Logan.

"This is a wood, you know, Cousin Dora," she said, as they entered the shady part of the grounds; "and suppose I am little Red-riding-Hood, going off to grandmamma's cottage, you know; and suppose the wolf is there before me, and you are not here, Cousin Dora, or if you are, why, you are a lady walking in a wood, and I am a little girl, and you know nothing about me. Mind, you know nothing about me."

To be known nothing about, to be unguided, unwatched, ready to be devoured by the cruel wolf, was evidently exquisite enjoyment to Eva.

"The very child feels it," thought Dora, with a sigh, "there is a wild sort of pleasure in independence, even though it should lead us to danger. Oh! Eva, I feel as you feel. I have a home here which ought to be a happy one, and is not. Yes, I too long for the wood and its perils. Anything, Eva, anything for liberty!"

In the mean while Eva trotted on demurely, acting her little part, but the wolf came sooner than she and Dora expected. He came as

they turned the corner of the alley, under the aspect of Mrs. Logan, sitting by Mr. Templemore's side on the old stone bench. She was prettier than ever. Dora saw it at a glance. Never had her cheeks worn a rosier bloom, never had her dark eyes had a more laughing lustre. The goddess Hebe herself could not have looked brighter or younger than Mrs. Logan looked as she rose and came toward Dora with the sunniest of smiles on her rosy lips.

"Dear Dora," she said, with that warmth which she could always put in her voice and in her manner, though there was so little of it in her heart, "I am so glad to see you again!"

And she pressed Dora's hand very cordially. As Dora stood with her hand clasped in that of Mr. Templemore's future wife, she fell into a strange, sad dream. This was Florence, the Florence whom her brother had so loved, whom he had entirely forgiven, and toward whom he had been so indulgent. Her look, her smile, her voice brought back the past, and with it some of its feelings. For his sake Florence had been dear, after a sort of fashion. For his sake she had felt something like tenderness toward this light, frivolous little creature, and though he had been so cruelly wronged, for his sake still she could not look on her quite coldly.

This woman, such as she was, had been a portion, a very dear one, alas! of her brother's heart; how could Dora forget this, and feel resentfully toward her because she was in a few weeks to become Mr. Templemore's wife?

"I will not be unjust," she thought, with a swelling heart. "I will not be ungenerous or mean."

But though her greeting was friendly, it was not cheerful. This Mrs. Logan did not perceive. She was not more clear-sighted than she had ever been. Her utter want of sense

and penetration redeemed the frivolity of her nature, or at least excused it. She was perfectly satisfied with Dora's manner, and amiably stooped to bestow a loving kiss on Eva, who, forgetting her part of little Red-riding-Hood, stood looking on mute and sulky. But if the wolf himself had been attempting to devour her, Eva could not have uttered a more piercing scream, or flung herself away more resolutely than she now did at that proffered caress.

Dora, who witnessed such a burst of temper for the first time, remained amazed. Mrs. Logan looked piteous, and Mr. Templemore turned pale with anger.

"Eva!" he said, almost sternly, "beg Mrs. Logan's pardon at once."

But Eva glared at Mrs. Logan, and looked wicked with mingled temper and passion. She looked as Dora had seen her father look for a moment when the cheating of the Dubois was exposed, and the likeness was so strong that it brought back the day, the room, and the guilty pair, and his face all before her with the vividness of reality.

"Eva!" said Mr. Templemore again.

But Dora now interfered. She sat down on the bench, and she took Eva on her knee. From her heart she pitied the child, and something of that pity Eva read in the eyes of her young governess, for when Dora said reproachfully, but with more sadness than reproach in her tone:

"Oh! Eva, Eva! is this your promise?"

Eva burst into tears, and, clinging to her, sobbed pitifully, "I—I—am very sorry—but—but I was—frightened—I could not help it, Cousin Dora!"

This was a very lame excuse indeed, but Mr. Templemore, who wanted to be satisfied with it, said cheerfully:

"Well, Eva, behave better another time, and do not be frightened? That is all."

Eva hung her head without answering; and

to prevent a renewal of the scene, Dora took her hand, and saying it was time for her music-lesson, she led her away, followed by Fido.

"Fido, too!" plaintively exclaimed Mrs. Logan, whom the supercilious little King Charles had never favored with his liking.

"Yes, Fido too," answered Mr. Templemore, half amused and yet half vexed at Dora's empire. "Miss Courtenay is a Circe, whom all creatures love and obey."

Some admonition, however, Dora seemed to bestow on her pupil.

Mr. Templemore saw the child look up as if pleading for forgiveness; then Dora stooped and kissed her, and they walked on. He bit his lip, though he smiled; it was very pleasant that there should be such tenderness between Dora and his child, but why must Florence be detested?

"Now, that's too bad of Dora!" said this lady, looking injured.

She spoke in a pretty, childish way; and as gently as if he were addressing a child, Mr. Templemore said,

"Our misfortune is not Miss Courtenay's sin."

Mrs. Logan pouted, but persisted in her declaration that it was too bad. But even as she said it her rosy face broke into smiles; and with nothing but good-humor in her black eyes, she said merrily—

"I suppose I am talking nonsense, as usual."

Yes, she was as usual talking nonsense; but as usual, too, she looked lovely whilst the silly and unmeaning words fell from her lips. This was her secret; and many a wiser man than Mr. Templemore was, could not have helped succumbing to the charm. If she smiled, the goddess of cheerfulness herself could not have looked brighter than she did. When she chose to be silent, she had a pensive grace, almost verging on poetry. Her gravity, even though it was in reality no more

than *ennui*, seemed to have a meaning in it. Mr. Templemore, indeed, had not known her a year without ascertaining some of the deficiencies of this pretty creature; but she was a pretty creature, and he was to marry her in a month, and willingly he shut his eyes and ignored what it was not quite pleasant to scrutinize too closely. He had, moreover, a method of dealing with her which Florence was too shallow to detect, but which was very convenient. Mr. Templemore seldom or never argued with Mrs. Logan; he seldom or never explained anything to her; he rarely contradicted her. He heard her, he was amused by her, and he did his best to please her, according to her own tastes—not to his. Of course this promised him many a vacant hour for the future, but Mr. Templemore had perceived this after he had been engaged some time, and he was both too wise and too much in love to deplore it very deeply. So when Florence supposed that she had been talking nonsense, and looked exquisitely pretty as she said it, Mr. Templemore retained the latter fact and dropped the former, and looked at her with tender admiration as they walked away.

The morning's excitement had made Eva feverish. So leaving her with Fanny, Dora stole out into the grounds before sunset. She wanted to commune in peace with her own wearied thoughts—away from Mr. Templemore and Mrs. Logan. But it was not to be. She had scarcely walked ten steps before Mr. Templemore stood before her. How gay and cheerful he seemed, with how bright a smile he threw away his cigar, and coming toward her, said, with the very look and tone of Doctor Richard—

"Do tell me what you think of that tree, Miss Courtenay, and what its slender trunk and drooping boughs suggest?" Without giving her time to answer the question, he at once resumed: "That tree is a nymph, who being pursued and overtaken by the god Faun,

raised her hands and implored Diana. The goddess of the silver bow relieved the fugitive's distress by bidding her take root and grow here. And see how the poor frightened nymph keeps ever looking round at her pursuer! She has forgotten, I suppose, that he is gone—gone forever, with all the pretty things of heathen fable. I wonder, Miss Courtenay, what has become of these heathen gods and goddesses, who were so mighty once?—can you tell?”

“No, Mr. Templemore,” she gravely replied; “but you are mistaken about that tree. It is a tree, and has a tree's life, and a tree's hopes and fears. I saw it last autumn with a few green and yellow leaves quivering on it still. It was no nymph then, as you seem to think. It was a poor tree, conscious of winter and frost and snow, and it stood thus, seeming, as you say, to turn, it was to listen for the coming of the wind that was to wither its last green boughs.”

Dora spoke sadly, more sadly than she knew, for looking at that tree she thought, “I too am rooted to my fate, and come storm, come sunshine, I must bear it and stay here.” The whole day long she had thought over her lot, and she had found no remedy to it. Necessity, that hard task-mistress, kept her chained to Les Roches. Means of escape, indeed, were at her command; but to marry John Luan was surely a worse evil than to see Mr. Templemore with Mrs. Logan. “It will last a month—no more,” she thought; “and before the month is out, I may have found something else—something which will give me bread, and not inflict this torment upon me.”

“That girl is not happy,” thought Mr. Templemore; “but what can ail her?—is it that John Luan?”

He was half vexed at the thought; he would have liked to fill the house with sunshine just then, and, lo and behold, you two evil-boding

figures, little frowning Eva and her melancholy governess, were already marring his coming happiness.

Unconscious of the construction Mr. Templemore put on her unusual gravity, Dora was walking back slowly toward the house, and he was walking by her side. Both were silent, both walked with downcast eyes, and both, as they emerged from the grounds into the flower-garden, saw not the group already gathered there. Miss Moore and Mrs. Courtenay sat on garden-chairs near the house; Mrs. Logan, wondering at Mr. Templemore's absence, went about the flower-garden as restless as a bird on the wing, and wherever she went Mrs. Luan went too, like a big but silent blue-bottle fly.

“Why, there is Mr. Templemore, with Miss Courtenay, I declare!” exclaimed Mrs. Logan, evidently amazed.

“Yes—they have been to the summer-house, you know,” stolidly said Mrs. Luan.

“Summer-house!” echoed Mrs. Logan, coloring; “why, there is none here, Mrs. Luan.”

“There ought to be, you know. Perhaps they were in the school-room.”

Mrs. Logan tapped her foot, and looked at Mrs. Luan with profound contempt.

“The school-room is behind us, and they are in front—pray, don't talk nonsense, Mrs. Luan,” she said, very superciliously.

“I don't mind it—let it be the summer-house or the school-room, I can trust Dora with Mr. Templemore, you know,” said Mrs. Luan, buzzing on stolidly; “I did not like it at first, because one must always mistrust widowers or single men—but not Mr. Templemore, you know.”

“Really, Mrs. Luan, you amaze me!” exclaimed Mrs. Logan, turning crimson. “Mr. Templemore and I have been engaged for the last year!”

“He did not tell us so, you know; and, on

the whole, I think widowers are worse than single men. Paul always said so."

Paul's name silenced the angry reply which rose to Mrs. Logan's pretty lips. "She owes me a grudge for Paul's sake," she thought, giving her companion a furtive look; "and she only says all this to vex me." So, with cool impertinence, and the sweetest of smiles, she retorted:

"Dear me, I should not have thought a widower like Mr. Templemore so objectionable. Suppose he married Dora?"

"Oh! we should all have liked that very much, of course," replied Mrs. Luan, with perfect candor; "and he admires Dora so much, for he told me so; but would he have married her, you know?"

"Just so," replied Mrs. Logan, with a merry little laugh.

"Because he might only have flirted with her, you know," persisted Mrs. Luan, buzzing on; "and we should not have liked that at all."

Mrs. Logan had no time to answer or question, for Mr. Templemore and Dora were now too near, but she felt both indignant and confounded. What had Mr. Templemore and Miss Courtenay been doing out in the grounds? Not sitting in the summer-house, since there was none; but then what did it mean about the school-room? There is nothing more dangerous than a mixture of truth and falsehood, and both these elements were so mingled in Mrs. Luan's rambling remarks, that Mrs. Logan was incapable of detecting the wheat from the chaff. Mr. Templemore had seen a good deal of Dora, and he had not told her or her friends that he was engaged. How did she know that he had not flirted with his daughter's governess?

Mrs. Logan being quite capable herself of flirting, though engaged, could not help suspecting her betrothed of a similar weakness. Besides, she grudged Dora Mr. Templemore's

evident admiration. She resolved to watch them both, and to read the signs of past or present flirtation in their looks. She read nothing there. They came toward her, unconscious of all harm, and Mrs. Logan, being silly, but by no means mistrustful, thought, on seeing them both so calm and grave:

"I wonder if that old worry did it to tease me? But no, she is too great a fool!"

Satisfied with this contemptuous opinion of Mrs. Luan, she laughingly discarded Mr. Templemore, and passing her arm within Dora's, led her a few steps away, to have a confidential chat.

"Miss Moore says Eva is poorly," she said, looking piteous. "Is it not provoking? There never was such a little worry! She does it on purpose, you know. But is it not nice to meet again, Dora? Do you remember the catalogue?"

Dora looked at her in indignant surprise; but Mrs. Logan's black eyes were as full of glee as if there were no grave in Glasnevin.

"I must bear that, too," thought Dora. "Well, he forgave her, and so must I."

"What a blessing that you have undertaken that little moukey!" resumed Mrs. Logan. "What should I have done but for that?" she asked, shaking her head from right to left, and from left to right, in amazement at her own predicament. "She falls ill to vex me, you know. However, Mr. Templemore is tired of it, and we are to be married in a month. Is it not dreadful? It quite frightens me. Mr. Logan did just as I wished; and Mr. Templemore is very kind, but still it is dreadful, you know!"

Mr. Templemore now joined them. How happy, how genial he looked!

"He likes her so," thought Dora; "and so did Paul. Be it so, and may *he* never waken and discover that *he* has made a mistake! May *he* never repent, or have cause to forgive!"

She soon left them. They could not want her society, and she needed solitude. She entered the school-room, to be quiet and alone there; but a little snivelling sound, proceeding from a dark corner, betrayed the presence of Eva.

"Eva," she asked kindly, "why are you here alone?"

"I am not alone," sobbed Eva; "Fido is with me!"

"Why did you not come to me in the garden?" soothingly asked Dora, sitting down, and drawing the child toward her, whilst Fido came creeping to her feet.

"You—you were with Mrs. Logan!" was Eva's broken and reproachful reply.

Dora sighed. She could not tell the child that she need not be jealous of her affection, so far as Mrs. Logan was concerned; but she could soothe her poor little wounded heart with more than her usual share of love and caresses. She took Eva on her lap, and whilst the dog curled round on a cushion at their feet, she sat by the open window, and looked up at a pale evening sky. The sound of voices, above which rose every now and then the silvery laugh of Florence, came to her ear very distinctly. Mrs. Luan, indeed, was mute, but Mrs. Courtenay chatted freely and merrily. She had at first been much affronted with Mr. Templemore for being engaged to Mrs. Logan, and her manner to that lady had also been both odd and perplexed during the earlier part of the day. Poor Paul's faithless mistress, and Dora's happy rival, she naturally detested; but then she must be very polite and attentive to Mr. Templemore's future wife.

The contest between two such opposite feelings ended, of course, in favor of kindness and good feeling; but for once her mother's pleasant little voice, blending so gayly with Miss Moore's, and Mr. Templemore's and Florence's merry laughter, grated on Dora's ear. She

thought of Paul—of Paul a second time replaced and forgotten.

"And is it thus with the dead?" she said to her own sad heart; "they have fought bravely, generously, but others reap the sweet rewards of victory—and who thinks of them?"

Alas! is it not always so? When peace comes after disastrous war, how many are there who, midst the joy of its advent, remember the slain? They lie on distant battle-fields, their cold faces turned to the sky, their nerveless hands still clasping the useless sword or gun; and who thinks of the ten hours' fight which ended thus? Some have crawled away to lonely spots for a drop of water; they slumber, hidden midst grass and flowers, by sweet bubbling streams; but are they more forgotten in their solitude than the heaps of dead, which say where the fighting was hottest? And it is surely well that they all sleep so soundly. Let them never waken to tax man with his ingratitude, or feel that their blood was shed in vain; let them never know that careless Nature will yield her flowers, and verdure, and sweet waters to men more fortunate, though not more deserving, than they were.

Some such answer came to Dora as she sat thus with the child in her arms, and the dog at her feet. It had been hard for Paul, but he had prevailed—that "bad" was over, and surely his was now a divine, an eternal present soaring forever beyond such mortal evils.

"And to you also that rest will come," said a tender voice; "then fight the good fight, remember the reward, and grudge not the cost or the toil."

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was designedly that Mr. Templemore had ignored Eva since the morning's scene, but he now suddenly remembered her existence, and raising his voice, he said:

"Where is Eva?"

Eva did not answer, and Mrs. Courtenay said:

"I dare say she is with Dora. I don't see Fido; they are sure to be all three together."

"What a siren!" exclaimed Mrs. Logan.

"Eva, you must go," whispered Dora.

"I can't," moaned Eva.

"I can't" meant "I won't," but Dora felt very lenient, so she raised her voice and said:

"Eva is here, Mr. Templemore, but she is feverish, and I think she had better not go out to you."

"Very well—I shall go to her," replied Mr. Templemore, cheerfully.

He went to the open window by which Dora was sitting, and standing outside, he said:

"I hope you are not sleepy, Eva, for Fanny is going to bring a light, and I shall let you see those odd letters, as you call them, which you were so inquisitive about yesterday."

Eva became lively at once, as the eager question of "Where are they?" testified.

"Coming," gayly answered her father, "for here is Fanny."

So Fanny came with a lamp, which she placed on the table, and Mr. Templemore, sitting on the window-ledge, smilingly opened a roll of papers before Eva's view. The happy leisure of wealth was not wasted upon him. He was a student, and a close one. It so happened that he had not found one poor patient in Rouen since his return, so, having time to spare, he bestowed it on the tempting but arduous pursuit of deciphering cuneiform inscriptions. Here was a puzzle after his own heart. The table in his study was covered with the copies of the strange arrow-headed characters—books in which the labors of Grotefend, Oppert, Menant, and Sir Henry Rawlinson were set forth, made a goodly pile near the drawings. All these had excited the curiosity of Eva, and even roused that of Mrs. Logan. She had even asked to know "what all that was about?"

"Only Darius," he had carelessly replied. Mr. Templemore knew better than to talk to his betrothed of the great rock of Behistan, not merely because she was ignorant of its existence, but because her frivolous little mind could take no sort of interest in Darius, or the god Ormuz and his dwelling-place.

"Only Darius!" she repeated with a little laugh. "What an old bore that Darius must be!"

Pretty women are still pretty women when they make silly speeches—and Mr. Templemore looked fondly at the sinner. Unluckily she now left Miss Moore, and overheard him talking of this same inscription to Dora. He had brought it out, indeed, to show it to Eva, but he included Eva's governess in the remarks he made on this subject. He spoke of the great rock on the frontiers of Media, of the lofty tablet inaccessible as an eagle's eyrie, on which the conqueror inscribed the glories of his race, the vastness of his empire, and that Persian attribute, his hatred of falsehood; and Dora, though as ignorant of this subject as Mrs. Logan, listened with attention, put a few questions, and was not answered with an "Only Darius!"

"He talks to her!" thought Mrs. Logan.

She stood in the garden a little behind Mr. Templemore, who did not see her. But how well and how vividly Florence saw the picture framed by the window of the school-room! A pale globe and a black slate in the background; on the central table a bronze lamp with a pure white flame, burning like a captive spirit in its crystal prison, and by the window in front Dora leaning back in her chair with Eva on her lap, and looking over the child's head at the papers spread out for them both by Mr. Templemore.

"That's the school-room," said Mrs. Luan, whom Mrs. Logan thought far away, and who stood by her elbow.

Florence started. She was stung to the

very heart. Yes, that was the school-room, and Mr. Templemore had chosen a governess who was both pretty and young for his child. He had chosen a girl with bright hair, and eyes both soft and bright—whose face lit with unconscious sunshine when he spoke, and with whom it was plain he liked speaking. Yes, that was the school-room—there was no summer-house, but there was a school-room! Faith and trust, so easy to the large-minded, and especially to the large-hearted, are very hard to the narrow and the cold. Mrs. Logan was too shallow to be a mistrustful woman, and too pretty to be a jealous one; but when mistrust and jealousy unexpectedly came to her, she had no generous belief, no proud consciousness, to help her to repel either enemy. Their first attacks found her helpless, and rapidly conquered her.

Mrs. Luan plucked her sleeve.

"That's the school-room," she whispered again; "and Dora's sitting-room is this way."

Mechanically Mrs. Logan followed her. Dora's sitting-room had a glass door opening on the garden, and as this was not closed, they entered it. Even in the moonlight Mrs. Logan saw that this was a very charming apartment. She had never seen it before; it was newly furnished. Mr. Templemore had therefore prepared it for Eva's governess.

Florence could not understand this. She had never had a child, and not being one of those women in whom the parental feeling is innate, she had no just conception of the love a fond father like Mr. Templemore could bear his little daughter. That he should have a whole suite of rooms prepared for Eva and her governess was incredible to her. She forgot that he might have meant to seclude himself and his young bride from all unpleasant contact with his jealous child, as much as to please or honor Dora; she only felt that Dora was treated "like a princess," and she could not tolerate the fact—especially she could not

understand it. In her indignation and amazement she said aloud:

"I shall certainly ask Mr. Templemore the meaning of all this!"

"She's Paul's sister, you know," sharply remarked Mrs. Luan.

Mrs. Logan felt sobered at once. She had written some fond, foolish letters to Paul formerly; true, he had returned them, but suppose a stray one, or that lock of her hair which he had certainly kept, or that photograph which had gone down with him to his grave (but Florence did not know this), had remained in Dora's possession, and should be produced against her to Mr. Templemore, who was so convinced that she had been forced into marrying Mr. Logan, and that he was her first love! It would not be pleasant; and some such threat Mrs. Luan must intend by again bringing up Paul's name when it had really no business to be uttered. So Mrs. Logan took the hint, and as her little secret had been kept up to the present, she resolved to watch Dora, indeed, but to do so with silent prudence, which, alas! was the very thing that Mrs. Luan wanted.

"I wonder if Mr. Templemore has done with his Darius," she petulantly exclaimed.

And she abruptly entered the school-room, but she found it dark and silent. The lamp was gone, the window was closed, and it was plain that Dora and Eva had left by the other door. Mrs. Logan went back to the garden, and found Mr. Templemore looking for her.

"Where have you been?" he asked.

"Looking at Miss Courtenay's rooms," she replied, with a bitterness she could not help displaying, but which he so little expected to find in her tone, that he did not detect it there.

"Eva is very feverish," he said, anxiously.

"I hope she is not going to be ill again."

"And I feel sure she is—just to vex me," was the short reply.

Mrs. Courtenay, who was close by with Miss Moore, unluckily remarked :

"But Eva is really an amiable child, Mrs. Logan—she took to Dora at once."

"Oh! but I cannot compare or compete with Miss Courtenay, you know."

"Why don't you win her like Dora?" good-naturedly replied Mrs. Courtenay. "She cut up her white silk to dress a doll for Eva, a bride she was, and of course, childlike, Eva fell in love with both doll and giver."

"A bride!" repeated Mrs. Logan. "What a strange idea, Mrs. Courtenay!"

"Very natural, you know. Even little girls think of marriage, and as for grown-up ones, they hear of nothing else—especially when they are pretty. Indeed, I think they have no comfort of their lives till they are really married. And as they must go through it, why, it is like extracting a tooth, the sooner it is over the better."

Mr. Templemore laughed at Mrs. Courtenay's philosophy of marriage, but as the garden was getting chill, he suggested that they should all go in. Only Miss Moore accompanied him to the drawing-room, however; Mrs. Courtenay confessed she was sleepy, and Mrs. Luan had already silently vanished.

The drawing-room of Les Roches was a large, old-fashioned apartment, with ancient furniture, a room which Florence had always liked. Her father having suddenly married again, and been presented with twin sons by his second wife, Mrs. Logan's expectations of fortune were no longer what they had once been. Her present income of a few hundreds and her little villa near Les Roches, did not satisfy her. She liked a château like Les Roches (especially to date her letters from), or a beautiful place like Deenah, with a lake and waterfalls, to live in. She liked lofty ceilings, and large rooms, and old furniture; not that she really admired these things, but because she had heard them praised, and

especially because they represented affluence and ample means.

The drawing-room of Les Roches was, therefore, a favorite apartment with Mrs. Logan, but for once it had lost its charm; and as she entered it, and sank into one of its deep chairs, there was something as like a frown on her smooth brow as it was possible to see there. But Mr. Templemore, who had never seen the fair Florence do more than raise her fine dark eye-brows in childish wonder, and who had no experience of anything like displeasure from this light but naturally amiable little creature, now read nothing save a slight degree of gravity on her fair, white forehead.

So whilst Miss Moore discreetly sat as far away from them as politeness permitted, he did his best to amuse and entertain his fair mistress. Mrs. Logan could not resist him. The cloud passed away from her face, her pretty mouth relaxed, her cheeks got back their dimples, and her laughing black eyes looked as full of fun as if she had been the wittiest of women. Hers was not indeed the brightness of Dora, that fine light from within which gave so wonderful a glow to her whole countenance, and transfigured it as if by magic; but it was brightness too, it was gayety, it was mirth, and Dora herself had often felt its power. A comparison between these two women now rose to Mr. Templemore's mind, not for the first time, indeed, though it had never been spoken before; but as his ill-luck would have it, he expressed it now.

Without saying a word he rose, went to a cabinet, opened a drawer, and drew out something with which he came back to Mrs. Logan's side. If Mr. Templemore had flung a pearl necklace or a diamond bracelet on the lap of Florence, and informed her that it was destined to Mrs. Templemore, all would have been well between them. But though his

intentions on that score were as liberal as even Florence could wish them to be, the subject was one utterly remote from his thoughts just then. He quietly placed an old morocco case in her hand, and without noticing how the sparkling light died out of her black eyes, he bade her open it.

Florence obeyed with a pouting lip, expressive of disappointment, but smiled as she saw a lovely enough miniature of herself in powdered hair and pink satin.

"But that is not my portrait," she said after a while.

"No—it is like you, but it is not your portrait. I bought it at a sale in England, on my way here, so struck was I with the likeness. It is a good enamel, too, though not equal to this," and taking it back from her, he handed her Nanette's legacy. Mrs. Logan's color rose.

"Dora sat for this," she said quickly. "You made her put on that blue dress and that old lace, but she sat to you for this portrait."

"Did you put on pink satin and sit to me?" he asked, amused at the question.

"You had it done from my photograph," she persisted.

"My dear child," he said good-humoredly, "do you not know an old enamel from a new one, or ancient style of painting from modern?"

"I suppose not," replied Mrs. Logan, apparently once more quite good-tempered; but at heart she was unconvinced. She looked at Dora's portrait, as she would call it, and she saw not, or she would not see, that though this was Dora's hair, these were not Dora's eyes. "She sat to him," she thought; "she sat in the school-room. This is Dora herself when she smiles, or is pleased and happy. I have seen her look so again and again when Paul was by."

Alas! the dead young beauty who had sat for that portrait, and smiled as it was painted,

had long been dust! She had gone away with her smiles, and the painter on whom, perhaps, they were bestowed had gone with her. The bright hair, the soft blue eyes, the snowy skin which Mrs. Logan gazed at with quick breath and angry eyes, need never waken love or jealousy now, whatever mischief they might have worked in their day.

"Is it not lovely?" asked Mr. Templemore.

He thought of the painting, but Mrs. Logan was convinced he meant the woman.

"Very," she replied. "Are enamels brittle?"

"I should be sorry to trust this one with a fall."

"Then take it—I am so awkward, you know."

He held out his hand, but before Mrs. Logan's had surrendered it to him, the portrait had fallen on the floor.

"Oh! I am so sorry!" she exclaimed, looking as innocent and as frightened as a child; but she stealthily stretched out her little foot, in the hope of finishing the work of destruction. "Don't look at it," she entreated, preventing him from stooping with a pretty, despotie gesture; "I am sure it is in pieces; and I do not want to be scolded. Don't, Miss Moore!" she screamed, in her little childish way, as this lady approached them to lend her assistance; "Mr. Templemore will be so angry."

"No, no," he said, trying not to look as annoyed as he felt; "but you must let me pick it up, Florence."

Again he stooped, again Mrs. Logan tried to prevent him, and, as ill-luck would have it, in the attempt she upset a small table on which he had placed the other portrait.

"I give it up," ruefully said Mr. Templemore, throwing himself back in his chair, and laughing, spite his vexation; "I have no doubt my lady in blue is damaged, and my lady in pink cracked through—I give it up."

Mrs. Logan was silent, and so disconcerted



“OH, I AM SO SORRY.”

at this accident, that she no longer opposed Miss Moore's good-natured attempt to pick up the fallen portraits.

"Oh! dear," said Miss Moore, "the poor lady in pink is quite spoiled; but, I declare, the lady in blue has not a scratch!"

"Oh! all right, then," cheerfully cried Mr. Templemore; "I can get another pink lady any day at a sale, but my blue lady *altra cosa!*"

Mrs. Logan's breath was gone to hear this, and she rolled her black eyes in utter bewilderment. Mr. Templemore, unconscious of the construction she put on his words, looked at the two portraits very attentively, shook his head over the lady in pink, and smiling complacently at the lady in blue, went and put them both away in the cabinet, locking the drawer and taking out the key—not quite so useless a precaution as he fancied it to be. Mrs. Logan was utterly confounded. Her mind could not very well conceive feelings she was incapable of entertaining. She could not believe that the only value Mr. Templemore really set on his enamels was an artistic value, having not the faintest reference to the regard he felt for the persons they happened to resemble. She did not understand that if the lady in blue had been like Mrs. Luan herself, her portrait would have been as precious in his eyes as it now was, bearing this strong likeness to Dora. All this was incomprehensible to her, and was not even made apparent by what would have proved it to another woman: Mr. Templemore's unnecessary frankness. No, this was rather an aggravation of his offence than any attenuation. Mrs. Logan was silly, and she knew, but did not mind it. She was accustomed to be treated like a pretty, childish, foolish thing by Mr. Templemore, and she liked it, for she had sense enough to know that, manlike, he loved her none the worse for it. She was so pretty, that she could be anything she chose, and yet charm him and every

one else besides. But it now occurred to her that Mr. Templemore might consider her so silly as to think he could do or say anything in her presence with impunity. "He thinks I can't see through him, that is it," was Mrs. Logan's indignant conclusion. "I am not so stupid though as you fancy, Mr. Templemore. Wait a while—wait a while!"

Unconscious of the storm which was brooding in Mrs. Logan's heart, Mr. Templemore turned back to her with a smile, and had just sat down by her side, when the door of the drawing-room opened, and Dora appeared on the threshold, rather pale and grave.

"Mr. Templemore," she said, a little hesitatingly, "will you come—Eva is really very feverish?"

He started and turned pale.

"It is nothing—nothing!" he exclaimed; "but I am going. Pray excuse me, Florence. Miss Courtenay, I am going with you."

And with that hasty excuse he was gone. The drawing-room door closed on them both. He had gone at her bidding, and she had come for him like a fair and evil enchantress, to lure him away from his liege love. But, no, to do her justice, Florence indulged in no such poetic fancies; she had not a particle of imagination, never thought of spirits good or evil, and was wonderfully suited to those days of prose. Her only conclusion, therefore, was the indignant one:

"Dora is about the most artful and audacious girl I ever knew!"

How little we do know of each other, after all, in this bright, clear world, where every thing looks so open, and is so secret and mysterious! If Dora had come herself to call Mr. Templemore, if she had undergone the needless pain of seeing him seated by the side of Florence, it was because she would not forget, not even for a moment, the tie that bound him.

"I shall remember it again and again," she

had said to herself in stoic self-subjection. "I shall not forget, or shun the inevitable."

"I hope poor Eva is not going to be ill again," exclaimed Miss Moore, looking much concerned.

"Yes, she is, just to vex me," resignedly said Mrs. Logan. "But if the marriage is put off again," she significantly added, "it shall be for good, you know, Miss Moore."

"Oh! but Mr. Templemore will not have the wedding-day put off," exclaimed Miss Moore, eagerly. "I know it; he has said so again and again."

"Oh! it is a matter of perfect indifference to me!" said Mrs. Logan, leaning back in her chair, and folding her hands on her lap. "It shall be the 7th of May, or it shall not be at all. I don't care, you know."

She spoke with as much seeming indifference as if the 7th of May had been the day fixed for a picnic or a dinner-party, and not for the most important event in her life. Again Miss Moore attempted to mend matters by declaring that Mr. Templemore would certainly go distracted if the 7th of May did not make him the happiest of men.

"Yes, yes, I know," said Mrs. Logan, a little superciliously, for she was now bent on seeming shrewd, and not silly; "but I must have facts, not words, you know, Miss Moore. I suppose Eva gets ill every now and then, and Miss Courtenay comes for Mr. Templemore, who sits up and goes distracted, eh?"

This speech was so unlike Mrs. Logan's usual discourse, that Miss Moore stared at her in silent amazement.

"No," she answered, at length, "Eva has had very good health since Miss Courtenay has been with us."

Mrs. Logan smiled incredulously, closed her eyes, pursed up her lips, and altogether looked so significant, that Miss Moore felt not merely amazed, but bewildered.

"Is he going to remain long away?" re-

sumed Mrs. Logan, raising her voice, and looking haughty. "Because I am going, Miss Moore."

"No, pray don't!" entreated Miss Moore. "Eva will get well,"—to Eva's ill-health she attributed Mrs. Logan's evident displeasure—"and it will be all right again, you know, dear!"

She spoke as soothingly as if she were addressing a child. It was the tone most people adopted with Mrs. Logan when they were at all intimate with her. But Mrs. Logan, who if she was silly, was by no means so childish as she chose to appear, now resented Miss Moore's manner as a deadly affront, and turning upon her with sparkling eyes, said, in a tone which had nothing of the child in it save its temper and naughtiness:

"You had better not, Miss Moore. I am not quite so silly as some people think. My eyes are quite open. I assure you I am wide awake, Miss Moore."

And she opened wide and rolled her black eyes in a manner which fairly confounded Eva's aunt. Indeed, she was quite awestruck on hearing Mrs. Logan hold out so formidable a threat as that implied by the statement that she was not silly, and that she was wide awake. For when foolish people set about being clever, and people of dull perceptions have made up their minds to be particularly clear-sighted, there is scarcely any amount of mischief which may not be expected. This Miss Moore, though not very bright herself, was clear-headed enough to guess. She felt that danger was at hand, though she was too much taken by surprise to know from what quarter it sprang. She still considered Eva's unlucky illness to be the cause of Mrs. Logan's wrath, and would probably have made some other exasperating reference to the subject, if Florence had not forestalled her by declaring that she was not going to wait Mr. Templemore's pleasure any longer. The haughty words were scarcely uttered when Mr.

Templemore entered the room. With a face full of concern he said :

"Eva is ill. I am anxious about her. I am going for Doctor Leroux."

"Now?" exclaimed Mrs. Logan.

"Yes, even if he cannot come I shall be glad to speak to him."

He looked so anxious, that Mrs. Logan forgot her suspicions, her displeasure, and even her resolve of keeping her eyes open. But so many unusual emotions had brought on a nervous mood, which now betrayed itself by an hysterical burst of tears, and the declaration that she, Mrs. Logan, was perfectly miserable.

"My dear Florence," kindly said Mr. Templemore, taking her hand, "you are not to blame. The poor child alone is guilty, but is excusable, because she is a child. We are innocent, and suffer for her sin even more than she does. I had hoped, indeed, that we could spend part of the summer here, but this last attempt is too unfortunate. We must remain in Deenah, and Eva, and Miss Moore, and her governess stay in Les Roches."

"Much the best plan," put in Miss Moore, rather eagerly. "Eva will grow out of it, you know."

"I hope so," replied Mr. Templemore; but never was hope uttered in a more despondent tone than this.

"I think I must go," moaned Mrs. Logan, pressing her hand to her brow; "my head aches so. And yet I should have liked to wait till you came back with that Dr. Petit."

"Petit!" cried Mr. Templemore with a start—"God forbid that man should ever come near Eva!"

"Ho can you be so prejudiced?" pettishly said Mrs. Logan; "you know he did me a world of good. And as for the other man, I hate him!—he has such a nose, and such a long, scraggy neck. I wonder you can have any confidence in him."

Mr. Templemore looked half amused and half indignant.

"I know," he said, "that when Petit luckily fell ill, you got well. I know, too, that when you are my wife, that man, of whom I have a perfect horror, shall never attend you. As to Leroux's neck and nose, you must be mistaken; they cannot be so bad as you imagine, else how could he have got his diploma, you know?"

Mrs. Logan was very much affronted at Mr. Templemore's banter.

"I know—I understand," she said, indignantly; "but as I have no faith in your Leroux, you will not wonder that I do not stay to hear his opinion of Eva."

"There is no necessity for your doing so," he gravely replied; "Eva is not so very ill, I dare say, but I am, as usual, nervous, and too anxious. I shall see you home, if you are going."

Mrs. Logan knit her smooth brow, and raised her arched eyebrows. Did Mr. Templemore want to get her out of the way? But she had said she would go, and she would not retract. So within a few minutes she was walking down the road that led to Rouen, with her arm resting on Mr. Templemore's. The way was short, but the night was fair and mild, and love is a great enchanter. A few kind words which Mr. Templemore said, unconscious of the force the turmoil in Mrs. Logan's little mind gave them, lulled to rest the tempest Mrs. Logan had first wakened there. Besides, it was a really delightful arrangement, if they were to live in Deenah, and Eva and Dora—the governess, he had called her—in Les Roches. And then he would not care much about Eva, if they had children. Yes, it was all right, after all; and as Mrs. Logan's nature was not merely light, but buoyant, she bade her lover a very cheerful good-night as they parted at the door of her villa.

"I shall be sure to send early to know about Eva," she said, airily. "Good-night,"

and she skipped into the house, and closed the door behind her.

Mr. Templemore walked through the narrow front garden, whence the scent of flowers rose sweetly on the night air, and he went down the road, feeling very sad and thoughtful. He was too just to be angry with Florence for not loving a child who hated her; but how careless she was, and how little she thought of hiding her indifference! She would sleep very soundly that night. It was natural, but it was hard. Hard, too, in some respects, was the fate that lay before him.

"She is a sweet, childish little creature," he thought; "I must prize her as I would a beautiful flower, and not exact from her the brilliant or enduring qualities of a gem. But—but I might have chosen more wisely." And Mr. Templemore sighed, as many a man has sighed before the marriage-day.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DOCTOR LEROUX was not within, so Mr. Templemore had to come back without him. He went up at once to Eva's room. Dora sat by the bed of the child, half bending over her, and telling her little stories to send her to sleep.

"And so"—Mr. Templemore heard her saying, as he opened the door—"the poor prince was wounded by the giant, and—"

"No, he was not," impetuously interrupted Eva; "he shan't be wounded. Don't let him be wounded, Cousin Dora!"

"Well, my dear, shall it be the giant?"

"Yes, I hate him. Kill him, Cousin Dora!"

"I don't mind if I do. And now suppose he is dead and buried—and suppose a little girl I know goes to sleep."

"I can't," moaned Eva. "Tell me another story."

But as Dora was going to comply, Mr. Templemore came forward. He found no change

in Eva. Her flushed cheeks and dilated black eyes still told him the same story that had sent him forth. Strong mental excitement had put her into that state. When he and Mrs. Logan left, Eva would probably get well again; but till then she would probably be subject to attacks, both dangerous and wasting with so susceptible a child.

"It is a hard case," he could not help saying to Dora. "I have every blessing life can give, save one. And I am powerless; a child's unreasonable feelings are too strong for me."

His clouded brow and troubled look struck Dora. He too was unhappy, and his sorrow allowed of no remedy. He could not have both Mrs. Logan and his child, and Eva must be sacrificed.

"Poor Eva!" thought Dora, looking down at the little flushed face on its white pillow.

He saw the kind look, but did not read its meaning.

"Dear Miss Courtenay," he said, anxiously, "it is late; you must not stay sitting up with Eva. Where is Fanny?"

"I sent her away."

"But you may want assistance. Better have Miss Moore."

"She is not quite well, and aunt will stay up with me."

He looked, and in a remote part of the room he saw Mrs. Luan nodding in an arm-chair. Still he was not satisfied.

"You cannot stay up," he said—"it really will fatigue you."

"I think Eva will soon fall asleep," quietly replied Dora.—"Will you not, Eva?"

She gently touched the child's hot cheek with her hand, and at once Eva seized that cool hand, and laying her head upon it, looked up at her young governess with something in her dark eyes of the silent, faithful love of a dog for its master.

"She is falling asleep," whispered Dora. "Her eyelids look heavy."

She would not stir, for fear of rousing the child, but sat patiently with Eva's cheek resting on the hand which the two little childish hands also fondly clasped. Mr. Templemore stood at the foot of the bed, looking at them both with a sort of pain. Why did not his child love the woman he was going to marry as she loved her governess? Why could not that good-natured Florence, whom he loved, be the mother of his little daughter as well as this Dora Courtenay, whom, alas! he did not love.

"You have bewitched my little Eva," he said to Dora. "I wonder if she would allow you to draw away your hand now?"

Dora made the attempt, but a fond, jealous murmur from the child, who was only half asleep, bade her desist. Mr. Templemore smiled, and stooping, kissed Eva. If he had not feared offending Dora, he would not have minded to kiss as well the pretty hand on which his child's head rested so trustingly. But he had a warm, generous heart—too generous not to feel grateful, and too warm not to express it.

"Dear Miss Courtenay," he said, looking at her earnestly, "God bless you for all your goodness to this poor motherless little girl, who, I fear, will never have any mother save you. Miss Moore loves her, but she is not judicious."

Dora looked at him silently.

"Yes," she thought, "Florence has got the father, but I have got the child."

"I have a favor to ask," he continued, in a low tone; "I trust nothing will happen to-night, but if that feverishness should come on again, pray promise me that you will call me—I shall sit up late in the study."

"I feel sure there will be no need to do so," confidently replied Dora; but she gave him the required promise, and on that assurance he left her.

Eva was very fast asleep indeed when Dora

drew her hand away, and left her. She went up to her aunt, gently touched her shoulder, and as Mrs. Luan awoke with a bewildered stare, Dora raised her finger in token of silence, nodded toward the bed, to imply that all was well there, then pointed to the door; but Mrs. Luan had been so fast asleep, that she had no conception of her niece's meaning, and it required a whispered explanation to make her understand at last that Dora no longer needed her presence. The fact at length reached her mind; she rose, and walking stealthily across the room, left it, and noiselessly closed the door behind her.

Dora went back to Eva's little cot, and bending over it, she looked long at Mr. Templemore's child.

"He has all but given you to me," she thought; "but if I were Florence he should give you to none. If I were Florence I would have won your heart whether you liked it or not, and made you mine before I became his. Oh! if I were Florence you should love me more than you love Mr. Templemore himself, and he should never be able to part us in his affection—to say 'I give this much to one, and that much to the other.'"

Her eyes were dim with useless tears. For she was not Florence—that happy, careless Florence, who had fallen asleep over a novel, whilst Paul's sister—Cousin Dora, the governess—sat up with Mr. Templemore's child. Yet she, too, slept. The gentle comforter came to her in the deep chair where she had seated herself to watch Eva's slumbers; he came and never ceased shaking his dewy poppies over these two, Dora and the child, till bright dawn had left the sky, and a sunbeam stole in upon them through the muslin curtains of the window. Dora woke first; but scarcely had she really awakened, and really come back from the torpor of sleep to the quick sense of life, when she met the look of Eva's black eyes. She nodded gayly to her.

"Well, young lady," she said, "how are you this morning? Quite well, it seems to me!"

"You did not finish that story about the prince and the giant," was Eva's answer. "I want to know how it ended."

"It shall end as you please, Eva," answered Dora, with an easy compliance rare in authors; "the giant shall kill the prince—no—well, then, the prince shall kill the giant."

"And marry the princess," suggested Eva.

"And marry the princess," kindly replied Dora.

"And so you did really sit up with Eva, after all, Miss Courtenay!" reproachfully said Mr. Templemore's voice.

Dora looked round and saw him standing behind her chair, and behind him again Mrs. Luan in her night-cap.

"I slept—I did not watch," deprecatingly replied Dora; "and I think Eva is well, Mr. Templemore."

Yes. He went and sat by her; he took her hand, he looked, he questioned, and his conclusion was that Eva was well again. This had been but a slight attack.

"And who knows," he added hopefully—"who knows, Miss Courtenay, but it may be the last?"

He looked down so fondly at Eva, it was so plain that no lover's happiness would fill the void left by her absence, that for his sake and from her heart Dora wished it might be as he hoped.

"But when that day comes," she thought, "you and I part, Eva. When your little childish love goes, as is but right it should go, to your father's wife, you shall see your last of Cousin Dora."

As if answering her thought, Mr. Templemore said gravely, "I dare not expect so happy a result just yet, and I think that in the mean while we must be very cautious."

He looked at Dora, and Dora guessed his

meaning. Eva was to see as little as possible of Mrs. Logan. She nodded assent, and, after a while, Mr. Templemore left the room.

"What a storm there was last night!" said Mrs. Luan, taking off her night-cap and flinging it across the room.

"A storm!" exclaimed Dora, amazed.

"Yes, how it rolled and rolled, and rattled and rattled!" said Mrs. Luan, shaking her head as if it still ached with the noise; "there never was such a storm, I think."

"Aunt, you must be mistaken. True, I slept, but I also woke now and then, and the moon shone, and the sky had not a cloud."

"Why, I came and looked at you; I was here the best part of the night, and I tell you the blue lightning did nothing but play about Eva and you. Of course, you were both asleep."

Dora went up to her.

"My dear aunt," she said gravely, "you must not talk so. There was no storm. Put on your cap—it was all a dream!"

Mrs. Luan looked at her sullenly, but she did put on her cap, as Dora bade her; and, after a while, she said sulkily:

"Yes, I suppose so—it was all a dream—all a dream!" and, to Dora's relief she left the room.

As soon as she had left Eva in Fanny's care, Dora went to her mother's room. She found Mrs. Courtenay up and dressed, and very cross.

"There never was such an old fidget as your aunt," she said—Mrs. Luan was two years her junior—"she did not sleep all night, I suppose, and she would not let me sleep either. She came in and out of my room, talking of the thunder and the lightning till she almost drove me wild."

Dora was much concerned.

"I wish she were with John," she said—"indeed, I am anxious about her; and I came to ask you, mamma, to stay with her as much

as you can, and cheer her—also you could notice if these strange fancies continue.”

“My dear child, your aunt had strange fancies before you were born, and your aunt will have strange fancies till she is in her grave. Her fancy just now seems to run on thunder and lightning, but I remember how it was cheese for seven months. Everything, she declared, tasted of cheese, or was cheese; when that passed away she raved about cats, and had five of them in the house. We were run over with kittens for I don’t know how long. They were very pretty, but great thieves, and I think that cured your aunt of them. However, I shall try and cheer her a bit, poor thing! I fancy she is vexed at Mr. Templemore’s marrying that little flirt; and it is provoking when we had made up our minds that it should be you, you know!”

“Mamma, pray do not,” entreated Dora, looking both mortified and pained.

“Very well,” resignedly said Mrs. Courtenay; “of course, if you don’t like it, or didn’t like him, there is nothing to be said or done; but, as I said, I shall cheer Mrs. Luan.”

Mrs. Courtenay evidently considered the task of cheering Mrs. Luan a charitable sort of bore, but also one which lay within her power. Howsoever right the former conclusion might be, the latter one rested on a great mistake. Mrs. Luan did not want being cheered, for the more Mrs. Courtenay forced her company upon her, the more she shunned and tacitly declined it. In vain her kind little sister-in-law followed her about, “cheering” her; Mrs. Luan gave her a wary look out of the corner of her sullen eye, and dropped her when Mrs. Courtenay was least on her guard, or could not follow her. This she did several times, till Mrs. Courtenay, perceiving her object, got affronted, and gave up cheering her ungracious, thankless relative.

“She runs away from me as fast as if she were a spider, and I the housemaid with the

broom!” indignantly thought Mrs. Courtenay; and the comparison was far more apt than she imagined it to be. Mrs. Luan was no longer the blue-bottle buzzing in Mrs. Logan’s heedless ear. They had changed parts. One lady was the foolish fly, and the other the cunning spider by whom it was to be ensnared.

There is a terrible power in “one idea.” A power which is often the stronger that it is embodied in a narrow mind. No fancy, no imagination, no tenderness, could divert Mrs. Luan from a purpose once conceived; and this tenacity, which is always dangerous, was the more formidable in her, that no strong moral law controlled it. She had but a weak sense of right and wrong, and she had done nothing to make that weak sense stronger. The evil she did she also loved, and the deeper she sank into that slough, the better she liked it. In her was fulfilled the terrible progression of sin; for however deficient, or erratic, or unreasonable was her mind, there was sin in her, as there often is even in the insane—not, indeed, when they are actually insane, but because their sin has helped their insanity. All moral evil is a want of reason, since there can be no evil where there is perfect reason; but unless that want be total—and it is rarely so—there is guilt. So says the law, and with it the common-sense of every country. Her will, her interest, had been Mrs. Luan’s rule of life, and she now reaped the fruit of this selfish doctrine. When a strong and criminal temptation came to her, she could not resist it, or, at least, her power to do so was very restricted. She was accustomed to be reckless in small things, and she knew not how to be careful or timorous, even though the stakes were heavy. The end in view was all she saw, or cared to see—the abyss between her and that end she both ignored and contemned. It was nothing to her, she was not to be the victim. In that dark pit she would throw Mr. Templemore,

Florence, Dora even, if it were needed—and Mrs. Luan did not care, provided she prevailed. She did not, indeed, put the matter in that light, there was no need to be so tragic about it; and as Mrs. Luan had no imagination, she could not exaggerate to herself the consequences of her actions, nor perhaps conceive them in all their bearings. She saw but one thing, and thought of but one thing: “Dora shall not marry John,” and its corollary, “Mr. Templemore shall marry Dora!”

In that mood, and with that thought, she watched and waited for Mrs. Logan.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

No inquiry concerning Eva was sent in by Mrs. Logan the next day. Mrs. Logan's head ached, and she lay moaning on the sofa, and forgot all about Eva. Nay, she thought herself ill-used because Mr. Templemore did not come to ask what ailed her; and when he appeared at length, she burst forth into reproachful lamentations, and was silent concerning his child.

“She has not much reason to love her,” thought Mr. Templemore; but he thought, too, that for his sake, at least, she might have remembered the little sinner.

“You might, at least, have sent round to know how I was, since you were too much engaged with Darius to come!” said Mrs. Logan, very tartly. “Fanny, or Miss Courtenay—any one!”

This was said with considerable impertinence, and Mr. Templemore colored deeply; but he looked at some flowers in a stand, and counted their petals, before he trusted himself to say.

“Florence, that is not right.”

Mrs. Logan was reclining on the sofa in her pretty sitting-room; but though the shutters were closed, and the room was darkened,

Mr. Templemore could see her color rise as he spoke thus, very gravely.

“I believe you have a great regard for Miss Courtenay!” she exclaimed, sitting up, and forgetting her headache.

“Very great,” he replied, gravely.

“I believe you admire her as well.”

“Very much.”

Mrs. Logan's dark eyes flashed

“Mr. Templemore,” she said, “do you think I am going to allow that?”

“And pray why should you not?” He spoke with irritating calmness. “I thought,” he continued, “that you and Miss Courtenay were old friends.”

“I detest her!” cried Mrs. Logan—“you like her, Eva likes her—”

“Aud Fido likes her,” he suggested, with a smile.

“Who would not admire so perfect a creature?” asked Mrs. Logan, enraged at his composure; “only, if your feelings are so strong on the subject, Mr. Templemore, why don't you marry her? Just tell me that? Why don't you marry her?”

He rose and looked at her.

“Florence!” he said—“Florence!” He was angry—deeply angry; and this, joined to a quick sense of her own imprudence, brought Mrs. Logan to her senses. Not knowing what to do, she burst into tears, and as it was the first time she had ever done so, she was at once forgiven. “But never do it again,” he said, wiping her tears away—“never do it, my dear child.”

Mrs. Logan liked being called “my dear child,” and being treated like a silly little thing, so she smiled, shook her head, and said:

“Well, you know, I like Dora very well, only she is awfully clever. She overpowers me.”

“Not with speech, surely?”

“Oh! she is silent with me; but she talks to you.”

Mr. Templemore bit his lip. So he must have a jealous Florence as well as a jealous Eva? But he would not resent this speech, and prudently rose to go.

"You are in a mighty hurry," Florence said, ironically.

"I received a telegram from my solicitor this morning, and I must answer it; but I shall come again after dinner, to see if your headache is better."

Again Florence was pacified. A telegram from Mr. Templemore's solicitor could only refer to marriage settlements. She smiled one of those sweet, bright smiles which none who saw could help loving, and sinking back on the sofa, she said, coaxingly,

"Mind you come early."

"Very early," replied Mr. Templemore, and he too smiled; but as the door closed upon him, and he walked through the little garden to the road, and thence on to Les Roches, he thought with some bitterness: "She is a child, and she has a child's want of reason, as well as a child's artlessness, so I must make up my mind to that." It was easy to say it—easier than to act upon it. The thoughts that came to Mr. Templemore's mind just then, whether he liked it or not, were not pleasant visitors. They were importunate, and though he bade them begone, they would not be denied. "You have been hasty," they said, "and now it is too late to repent, and you feel it. The child of seven may outgrow her folly, but the child of twenty-seven will never be wiser than she is to-day. You must expect no ripening of reason, no sweet maturity of thought, none of the wise and tender graces which come to woman instead of beauty and its bloom. This, indeed, you have in its fulness. Then remember it, and since your choice is both deliberate and free, be content."

Mr. Templemore had too much of that philosophy which is the gift of experience, not to abide by this conclusion, and what was more,

not to be in some sort satisfied with it. We say in some sort, because he had already passed that early and fervent stage of love in which the content is perfect, and the fond illusion complete. He could not help it. The wakening had come gently, gradually, without the least bitterness, and, what was better still, without removing Florence from his heart. She was not the divinity she had been for a few months, but she was a beloved woman, soon to be a wife, and whose faults and imperfections Mr. Templemore was inclined to view with a tender and lenient eye. Happy Florence, if she had known it. Her hold was strong and deep. Her whims, her jealousy, her little selfishness, even, could not shake it. She might make imprudent suggestions, and waken dangerous comparisons, with perfect impunity. It was in vain that Mr. Templemore both liked and admired Dora; the thought that this girl, and not Florence, was the right one, could not come to his mind, or move one fibre of his heart.

Florence had a glimpse of that truth when Mr. Templemore left her, but it was a glimpse, and no more, and it soon vanished in darkness. Had he really received a telegram, or was this an excuse to leave her and go back to Dora, and talk about cuneiform inscriptions with her? Then why had he said that he would come in the evening? Probably to keep her within, and prevent her from seeing what went on at Les Roches. No sooner had this fancy taken hold of Mrs. Logan's mind, than her headache was gone. She sat up, found out that she was quite well, ate a hasty dinner, that also she was quite equal to, and went off to Les Roches.

"The family had not done dinner," so said Fanny, who came out bright and smiling to show Mrs. Logan in. But that lady would not be shown in; her head ached again, and the air would do her good. Where was Miss Courtenay? In the school-room? No, Miss Cour-

tenay and Miss Eva dined with Mr. Templemore and Miss Moore to-day.

"Because I was not here!" thought Florence, turning away with an angry blush. She felt peevish and fretful, too, because Mr. Templemore did not come out to her at once; and she walked up and down the garden, thinking, "He does it on purpose, or, "He is staying to talk with Dora;" whilst Mr. Templemore, who was ignorant of her presence, was on his way to her house. But even if she had known this, would Florence have been satisfied? She was in the mood when nothing pleases, and when everything irritates. She walked, for the sake of shade, near the old château; its massive walls looked both cool and strong, and its long black shadow stretched over the ground, with the conical roofs of its turrets and the tall chimney-stacks of its high roof cut out in clear black lines, that faded away as they reached the green ring of trees that enclosed the flower-garden. But this way was both bright and beautiful—though the flowers in the parterres, stirred by a pleasant breeze, danced gayly in the light of the declining sun, all these sweet and delightful details of cultivated nature were thrown away on Mrs. Logan. She looked sulkily around her, and walked at random, like a foolish, purposeless little fly, whilst the spider watched her opportunity, and spread her web in the background.

"I suppose they will never have done dinner!" thought Mrs. Logan, in high displeasure at the slowness of Mr. Templemore and his family. "It is so pleasant to talk to Dora!"

In this mood she turned back to the house; as she approached it she saw Mrs. Luan sitting on a garden-chair.

"So dinner is over?" said Mrs. Logan.

"No, but it makes my head ache. They talk so!"

The eyes of Florence flashed.

"About what?" she asked.

"Oh! Darius, you know."

From the spot where she stood Florence could see into Mr. Templemore's study. His table was covered with books. She looked at them resentfully. Her jealousy was roused, and it applied to things as well as to persons. It displeased her that within a few weeks of his marriage, and on a day when her head ached, Mr. Templemore should have time for Darius and cuneiform inscriptions. A generous woman, however much she may be her husband's inferior, cannot feel so. She may pine to be like him—she can never long to bring him down to her own level. But Mrs. Logan was not a generous woman, and she now querulously wondered at Mr. Templemore's strange tastes. Was she to be bored with books and Eastern inscriptions after her marriage? Mr. Logan had been a great nuisance with boating, and a new fancy of his—hurling; but really Mrs. Logan preferred either taste to learning.

"I shall be sick of my life with Darius!" she thought, a little sullenly. "And what do they say about Darius?" she asked.

"I don't know," slowly replied Mrs. Luan. "They say Darius, but do they mean Darius, you know?"

Florence stared, then turned crimson. Of course, that was it! Darius and cuneiform inscriptions were the cloak these two used to converse freely in the presence of witnesses. For jealousy, not the fitful, capricious dawn, but the full and burning reality of the passion, suddenly invaded her as Mrs. Luan spoke, and with it came the blindness, the want of reason, and yet the perfidious subtlety of that pitiless feeling.

"So they talk of Darius!" she said, laughing. "In the study, I suppose?"

"No, but they did last night, you know—when he came up to Eva's room after you were gone."

Mrs. Logan shook from head to foot with anger. She had a violent temper, though few

even of those who knew her best suspected it, so well was it hidden under the veil of frivolous gayety and pretty childish ways—so seldom was the wicked spirit roused from the dark corner where he could lie sleeping for weeks and months undetected.

"And they were alone!" she at length gasped forth.

"Oh! no," replied Mrs. Luan, not seeming to perceive her emotion, "I was asleep in a chair."

Yes, she was sleeping, and the child no doubt slept too—and that was how they managed. They made opportunities in Eva's room upstairs, in the school-room below; in the study, in the garden—anywhere. She was deceived, betrayed, and wronged before marriage! Perhaps he meant to jilt her; perhaps, if he had no such intention, to supplant her was Dora's aim; or was it a mere low, vulgar flirtation, in which he risked his truth to her, and Dora her fair name? How could she know?—who would tell her? Not Mrs. Luan; Dora was her niece. No, she would tell nothing—and yet she was so stupid! Could it not be got out of her?

"How kind of you to sleep!" she said, tauntingly; "it is so convenient for the third person to sleep!"

"But I can both see and hear when I am asleep," sharply retorted Mrs. Luan—"oh! so well!"

"Come, come," replied Mrs. Logan, with gentle banter, and passing her arm within Mrs. Luan's, she led her away from the house as she spoke; "you can't make *me* believe that, Mrs. Luan—no, no. I am not brilliant, but you can't make *me* believe that. You could not repeat a word they said."

"I tell you I can," persisted Mrs. Luan; and looking triumphantly at Mrs. Logan, she added: "He told Dora she was to be a mother to his motherless little girl."

Deadly paleness overspread Mrs. Logan's

face, and she bit her lip; but Mrs. Luan, who could see and hear in her sleep, did not seem to be so quick in her waking hours, for she stared before her, and looking profoundly stupid, was aware of nothing.

"Yes," bitterly said Florence, "she is to be the mother of his child—to live here like a queen in Les Roches; and, as Eva falls ill when she sees me, he is to come here alone, and I am to wait at Deenah. I am to be the lady in pink, who can be broken and trod on with impunity, and she is to be the precious lady in blue, who is to be kept in a cabinet, and whom it were death to lose—I see—I understand."

These bitter and stinging remarks Mrs. Luan heard with perfect composure.

"What a beautiful evening!" she said.

"Indeed, Mrs. Luan, you are not going to escape me thus!" cried Florence, in a rage; but her wrath fell down in a moment as she saw the cunning look in Mrs. Luan's eyes. "I shall never find out anything that way," thought Florence—"never." So she laughed, and said, merrily, "That's a good joke, too, to want me to believe that Mr. Templemore cares a pin for Dora. Why, don't you see he is making fun of her?"

She looked at Mrs. Luan, and Mrs. Luan looked at her. Each wanted to deceive the other, and each, to her own woe, succeeded.

The best parts in the drama of life are not always given to the greatest or the noblest actors. The mean, the frivolous, often ascend the stage and fill it with the story of their tragic wrongs. A heavy woe lay before Florence. A cruel snare was being spread for her; she was but a weak, frivolous, and jealous little woman, incapable of a great or an heroic feeling, yet she was to suffer as if she had been a high-minded heroine, and to be sacrificed as ruthlessly as any innocent Iphigenia. But the Greek princess gave herself up to the knife, and never thought of revenge; and Mrs.

Logan was bent upon it, and though she was too shallow not to fall at once into the trap laid for her by her enemy, she was yet cunning enough to hide her thirst and longing for vengeance. Mrs. Luan, indeed, was not in the least deceived by Mrs. Logan's affected skepticism; but then, being only an obstinate and relentless woman, and by no means a clever or a shrewd one, she could not read Mrs. Logan's heart; and thus each fell into the toils of the other—and a jealous young beauty, as silly as she was pretty, and a selfish, narrow-minded woman, in whom the long-nursed love of self was fast turning into confirmed insanity, became the arbiter of a proud and innocent girl's fate, and held in their hands the weal or woe of the master of Les Roches.

"Why do you let him treat Dora so?" sulkily asked Mrs. Luan—"why don't you interfere?"

Mrs. Logan laughed.

"Dora can take care of herself—besides, he means no harm."

"Yes, but John would not like it—I am sure John would not like about that staircase in the school-room—I don't."

In a moment Mrs. Logan understood it all, or thought that she understood it. Mrs. Luan thus half accused her niece to her because she was jealous of Mr. Templemore for John's sake, and, thanks to that jealousy, the foolish woman could be made to betray every thing.

"What staircase?" she carelessly asked.

"Why, you see, Eva is often ill; and, to save time, Mr. Templemore goes up the staircase in the school-room, or Dora comes down to speak to him. It is such a round the other way; but I say John would not like it."

Mrs. Logan looked amazed, then contemptuous.

"Nonsense," she said—"you dreamed that. I don't believe it."

"Oh!" I dreamed it, did I?" exclaimed Mrs. Luan, with sudden wrath, and shaking

her head at Florence. "Did I dream that you jilted Paul, eh? I suppose, too, you will tell me there was no thunder last night, and that I did not see the blue lightning whilst he was with Dora?"

Mrs. Logan stepped back, and looked so startled that Mrs. Luan grew calm at once. She smoothed her heavy brow—she smiled.

"Why, Florence," she resumed, "you are not frightened, are you? But just see, by-and-by, if there be not a staircase in the school-room."

Florence could not answer at once; her throat felt parched and dry. The staircase was the confirmation of Mr. Templemore's guilt—thus he could have interviews with Dora which servants could not know of. He had but to cross the hall to go from his study to the school-room. He could watch his opportunities, or make them undetected; and when Dora could not come down to him, he could go up to her under that convenient pretence of Eva's illness.

"So that is it," she thought; "that is it—she wants to marry John some day, and yet to flirt with my husband in the mean time; but I shall put a stop to the one, and let her manage the other—if she can!—if she can!"

Mrs. Luan was looking at her with sullen triumph; but Florence only said, with feigned indifference:

"I don't care about that staircase—he never goes up it, I am sure."

"Will you watch to-night, and see him?" asked Mrs. Luan, eagerly.

Mrs. Logan dropped her a mocking curtsy.

"Thank you—you would go and tell them, and would they not have a laugh at my expense, that's all!"

"I should not tell—I don't want to—I only want you to put a stop to it. There's no harm, but John would not like it."

"Then let John prevent it!"

"You will not!"

"How can I?" asked Florence.

"Oh! it is quite easy," coolly said Mrs. Luan—"watch him, but don't show yourself, and tell him the next day that he stays too much with Dora. He'll say 'no.' Then pretend to believe him, and make him promise not to be so much with her, and he'll be frightened, and think you know something, and it will be all right, you know."

"But how can I come and watch?" asked Mrs. Logan, doubtfully.

"Oh! it is so easy. I'll let you in by the little garden-door, and we can see them in the school-room. I'll go home with you, and he need never know."

"Mrs. Luan, you might let it out; and if Mr. Templemore thought I had been watching him, he would never forgive me."

She looked so frightened at the thought of discovery, that Mrs. Luan had something to do not to laugh aloud at her simplicity. As if she wanted her plot to be known. Oh! dear, oh! dear, to think how stupid the world was; and they all thought her stupid—that was the best of it!

"Don't be afraid, Flo!" she said, patronizingly; "he'll not know, unless you tell him."

"The fool!—the idiot!" almost angrily thought Florence; "does she think I am afraid, that I will come and watch and hide, and all for John's sake. No, if I do come, and if it be so, let Mr. Templemore and Dora quake, and let John, let any man marry her after that if he will, or if he dare!"

"Well," urged Mrs. Luan, "will you come and see?"

There was a subtle look in her dark eyes, which might have warned a wise woman; but the words "come and see," lured Florence on. "To come and see," to confound Mr. Templemore, to humble Dora, and send her forth like a new Agar, and to outwit that insolent Mrs. Luan, who only thought of her stupid John. Yes, all these were temptations

which she knew not how to resist. Yet she seemed to hesitate, and it was with reluctance, with seeming terror that she said:

"Mr. Templemore will not know, will he?"

"No—no," replied Mrs. Luan, laughing; "I'll never tell him—never, never! All right, he shall not scold you."

"Oh! dear, I hope not," said Mrs. Logan, with a little shudder, and as if she stood in mortal dread of Mr. Templemore's scolding.

But that fear, if she felt it, she hid well. The sunniest of smiles beamed on her pretty face when Mr. Templemore and she met on his return to Les Roches. Temper and jealousy seemed to have left her as suddenly as they had come. Mr. Templemore was grave, indeed—perhaps he could not forget at once—but Florence was all sweet, innocent glee. He would have wished her to go in, maybe, to remonstrate, but Mrs. Logan said the evening was lovely, and asked to walk up and down in front of the house. She felt a particular inclination for the ground-floor windows of Les Roches, and especially for that of the school-room where Dora sat with Eva.

The child had been good all day, and Mr. Templemore dreaded to be so near her with Florence. No sooner, indeed, did Eva see her enemy, than, giving her a gloomy look, she flung herself on Dora's lap, whilst Fido uttered a sharp bark from a corner of the room. Mrs. Logan stood still, and looked ironically at Mr. Templemore, who colored with vexation; and Dora, unconscious of their thoughts, looked at them with sorrowful resignation. They stood before her in the red sunlight arm-in-arm, a happy couple, gazing at her in her nether gloom from the bright serene heights to which love had borne them.

"And thus they will pass through life!" she thought.

"I suppose I act like red on Eva!" said Mrs. Logan, moving on. "Very flattering, is it not, Mr. Templemore?"

She laughed, and looked more amused than vexed; but her quick eyes had gone over the school-room, and seen a door which might or might not lead to a staircase. "I must find it out," she thought.

There are days and hours of seeming success, when our schemes are favored to the fulness of our conception. True, that success is more apparent than real, true failure were the real blessing, but we do not know that till it is too late, and we have paid the cost of our triumph. The small ingenuity which consists in plotting Mrs. Logan had as well as Mrs. Luan. She now exercised it to her own detriment. Eva was playing in the school-room, where Dora sat watching her, and answering her now and then as cheerfully as she could, when the child's flippant speech broke on her thoughts.

"Cousin Dora," said Eva, "I am going to give Minna a bath."

"Very well, dear, but mind she does not take cold."

"Oh! I shall shampoo her, you know."

Dora did not answer, and Eva became very silent. Suddenly Mrs. Logan came up to the window and looked in. Dora was alone.

"Eva, come here," she said.

Eva did not answer. Dora looked round—the child was gone.

"Eva," she called, uneasily; but Eva did not reply.

"Surely she did not go and give Minna a bath near the waterfall," said Florence.

Dora started up. In a moment she was out of the room. She did not run—she flew. Yet she was scarcely out of breath when she reached the little cascade. The grayness of evening lingered around the spot, and the little pool looked both dark and deep. Dora knelt down, and leaning both her hands on the margin, she looked in. She saw the pebbly bed, and the water flowing smoothly over it; and as she saw them, she heard Eva's

voice talking far away with Miss Moore. With a sigh of relief she walked back slowly.

That slowness was favorable to Mrs. Logan. No sooner was Dora out of sight than she entered the school-room, opened the door, and went up the staircase. Eva's room was the first she saw. She gave it a rapid glance, then, opening another door, she stood in Fanny's room. This was not what Mrs. Logan wanted. Retracing her steps, she crossed Eva's room again, and this time entered Dora's.

She saw it well, spite the twilight. She saw it, but was blind, and did not read its meaning. That rather austere room, where Dora had read, and prayed, and conquered her full heart—where she had dreamed of the lost past, of her brother's grave, whence she had looked at the fountain in the court, and prevailed over fond rebellious youth, told none of its secrets to Florence. She only saw that it held some valuable articles of furniture, which she had secretly appropriated, and which Mr. Templemore, unconscious of the fact, had dedicated to Dora's use.

"He knows that I wanted that carved *prie-dieu*," thought Florence, angrily, "and those old damask curtains, and he gives them to her—to her!"

How could she doubt his guilt after that? She did not. Burning with resentment, she went down, and reached the garden as Mr. Templemore came back with the flowers she had asked him for, and Dora approached the house with Eva. On seeing Mrs. Logan, the child clung to her governess, and hid her face in her garments.

"How flattering!" exclaimed Mrs. Logan shortly.

Mr. Templemore could scarcely repress a sigh. These last two days had not been days of happiness to him. Eva had been ill and naughty, Florence irritable, and Dora sad and grave. What discord had thus suddenly en-

tered his once happy home; for whilst Florence had been amiable and sweet, he had found even Eva's naughtiness endurable—but now everything was a trouble and a pain. Perhaps it was not unnatural that when Mrs. Logan spoke of going, because she was sure a storm was coming on, he was not very eager to detain her. He said, indeed, that Les Roches was safe since it possessed a lightning-conductor; but when Florence professed to fear lightning-conductors, he only laughed, and did not argue her out of her fear. It had formerly pleased Mrs. Logan that her lover should laugh at any foolish speech she uttered, but now she felt affronted. Besides, did she not see he wanted her to be gone! Of course he did, to go up that staircase to Dora. But she would humor him, she would; only maybe he might repent it. He saw her leave, and as they parted at the garden gate of her villa, Mrs. Logan said tauntingly:

"Good-night. Don't sit up too late with Dora."

He wanted to answer, but with another little taunting laugh she was gone. He heard the door of the villa open and shut again, and he slammed the garden gate and walked home, boiling with anger and vexation, and never once suspecting that the pretty sinner was walking leisurely behind him; but whereas he entered Les Roches by the front gate, Mrs. Logan crept round to a low side-door in the wall, where she was to find Mrs. Luan, according to their agreement.

Mrs. Luan had lost no time. She had laid her plans with that superfluous cunning which is one of the attributes of diseased minds; and she carried them out with ingenuity and success. When Florence left Les Roches, Mrs. Luan went up to Eva's room. She found Fanny with the child, whom she was going to undress.

"Eva," she said, "shall I show you the shell box now?—I am going to put it up."

"Oh! do," cried Eva, darting away from Fanny, "do show it to me, Mrs. Luan!"

This shell box Eva had raved about for days, so wonderful had been Mrs. Luan's description of it, and so persistently had it been denied to all her longing entreaties.

"Wait, Fanny, wait!" she cried; "I shall be back directly."

And Fanny good-humoredly complied, and was willing to wait her little mistress's pleasure. The shell box stood on Mrs. Luan's table near a glass full of a clear and fragrant liquid. It was a lovely box in Eva's eyes. For it had a rose made of pink-colored shells on its lid, and white flowers—strawberry-flowers, on its side.

"Oh! how beautiful!" cried Eva. "Oh! what a box!"

Now it so happened that Mrs. Luan believed in the box too, so she replied grimly:

"It is a box! Worth any money!" so saying, she took the glass and sipped some of its contents.

"I am so thirsty!" hinted Eva.

"You can't have this," replied Mrs. Luan. "They are my drops—not fit for little girls."

But she put down the glass, and taking up the box, muttered something about putting it away in the next room.

Eva remained alone with Mrs. Luan's drops. No more than her great mother and namesake did she know how to resist temptation. She looked round. Mrs. Luan was not coming back; she took a sip, then another, then she almost drained the glass; and having done this, she ran back to her own room in guilty glee.

"I have done it!" she said to Fanny—"I have done it!"

"Done what?" naturally inquired Fanny. But Eva was not tempted to tell—she heard Miss Courtenay in her room, and was mute.

Dora sat by her open window watching

for the storm which Florence had foretold. It came at last. It was not a violent one, yet occasionally a flash of lightning filled the court, and touched the little fountain below with sudden light; then a remote peal followed, and a low rushing shower of rain.

"When that storm is over there will be calmness," thought Dora. "I wonder why it is not so with us. Why we are ever ready for turmoil and torment!"

She had not time to pursue these thoughts; the door of her room opened, and Mrs. Luan came in.

Dora looked at her in some surprise. Her aunt never came to her room. What had brought her this evening?

"I feel that storm," said Mrs. Luan, sitting down, evidently with the intention of remaining some time. "I feel it in my head so." She took off her cap and threw it on Dora's table as she spoke.

"It makes your head ache, aunt?"

"No, not ache; but it puzzles me so."

She looked rather excited and bewildered.

"You would not like to sleep, aunt?" said Dora; "maybe it would calm you."

"Sleep!—why, what is the time?"

A clock in the hall below answered the question by striking eleven.

"Do you think they are all in bed?" asked Mrs. Luan.

"The house is very still, aunt."

"Yes; but Mr. Templemore is in his study."

Dora did not answer this; Mr. Templemore sat up late, and she knew it—but what about it?

"I am sure Eva is ill!" suddenly remarked Mrs. Luan, staring at her niece.

"She is very well, aunt."

"And I am sure she is ill with that storm—ill and alone, for Fanny is below."

A vague uneasiness took hold of Dora. She rose, she crossed her room, she entered Eva's,

closely followed by Mrs. Luan. They found the child sitting up in her bed, with a wild stare.

"Eva! Eva! what ails you?" cried Dora, alarmed.

But Eva did not answer.

"Go for Mr. Templemore," said her aunt; "he is in his study—go down the staircase, and you will get to the study at once, you know."

But though Dora had no suspicion of the trap laid for Mrs. Logan, and in which she too was to fall, she would not do this. To go thus and call Mr. Templemore with alarm in her looks, seemed to her like striking the talisman in the Arab story—a deed to be delayed as long as possible.

"But the child is ill—quite ill," said Mrs. Luan, stamping her foot angrily. "Go—go at once!"

"No, aunt," replied Dora, firmly; "there is no need for that. I can see this is nothing. Eva was frightened, and had the nightmare. she is well now."

"You will not go down to the study and do it?" said Mrs. Luan, stamping her foot, and shaking her head at her niece. "You had better—mind, you had better, Dora."

"Aunt, I will not."

"Then I will." Mrs. Luan stepped toward the door; but Dora forestalled her, and locking the door, took out the key.

Mrs. Luan looked at her with insane fury in her eyes.

"You'll rue that, Dora," she said; "you'll rue that! I wanted to be the making of you—but you'll rue that!"

Dora did not heed the threat then; but how she remembered it later!

"Aunt," she said soothingly, "what ails you? I am quite willing to ring for Fanny."

"Do if you dare!" angrily, exclaimed Mrs. Luan. Then she added, more gently, "What is it to me?"

"Look!" soothingly said Dora, "and see how well Eva seems now."

"Why, so she does!" exclaimed Mrs. Luan, converted with suspicious facility; "and do you know, Dora, I think I shall go to bed."

"Do, aunt, it will do you good; and Eva is falling asleep."

Mrs. Luan yawned, and looked very sleepy as she rose and left the room.

Eva was falling asleep, as Dora had said. She had sunk back on her little couch, and her cheek lay on her pillow; her eyes were closed, her breathing came regularly through her parted lips. "I suppose it was the storm frightened her," thought Dora. And lest Eva should waken again, she sat down by her and watched patiently, listening to the low rushing of the rain. And as she sat thus, Dora was startled at hearing her name uttered by Mr. Templemore's voice in the room below. She rose, she opened the door, and listened. Yes, it was he who was talking on the staircase.

"For God's sake! what is it?" he exclaimed; "Eva is ill again!"

"No! no!" eagerly replied Dora, unlocking the door, and going down to meet him; "she was a little feverish, but she is fast asleep now."

The color returned to Mr. Templemore's pale face, and he breathed a sigh of relief.

"Thank Heaven!" he said; "Mrs. Luan frightened me."

Dora had come down with a light in her hand. She still held it as she stood on the last step of the staircase, and Mr. Templemore saw the troubled, startled meaning which came to her face as he spoke.

"Did you not send her?" he asked.

"No," she answered. But the confusion of her denial did not escape him. Without saying a word, Mr. Templemore rang. Dora thought it best to begin an explanation.

"I believe—" she said—but the words had scarcely passed her lips when the door opened abruptly.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"She's very cunning, is Dora," thought Mrs. Luan, as she left Eva's room; "but I am more cunning than she is, you know."

And with a low laugh of triumph at her own sagacity, she went down below and joined Mrs. Logan. That lady stood alone, and in the dark, in Dora's sitting-room, waiting impatiently for the tokens of Mr. Templemore's guilt.

"Mrs. Luan," she angrily whispered, "it must be all your invention. I have been here this hour, and Mr. Templemore is not coming."

"But he will come, and Dora will come down to him when Eva is asleep—and I say John would not like it."

Repeated assertion is like the drop of water whose ceaseless splash wears out the stone beneath. Mrs. Logan was convinced, and though she stayed to have ampler proof, she did not need it. Still, Mr. Templemore came not.

"I wonder where he is?" whispered Mrs. Luan. "Go out in the garden and see if there be a light in his study."

Mistrust, feigned or real, held Mrs. Logan back.

"Mrs. Luan," she said, "if ever Mr. Templemore learns through you that I was here to-night, I'll—I'll make you repent it as long as I live!"

And she did not stir.

Mrs. Luan laughed at the folly of the woman who thought that she wanted to betray her to Mr. Templemore.

"Then I'll go and see," she said, carelessly, and as if to go were not what she wanted.

She went, and did not come back. At first Mrs. Logan waited patiently, then she got irritated and angry; she did not venture to cross the school-room; but opening the French window, she entered the garden. It was raining fast, but Mrs. Logan did not mind the rain. She looked at the window of Mr. Templemore's

study. A calm, steady light was burning there, and showed her his bending figure. But as if an enchanter's summons had suddenly disturbed him, he rose, the study grew dark, then the school-room was lit, and Florence distinctly saw Mr. Templemore through the muslin curtains.

"He's calling Dora," said Mrs. Luan's voice in the darkness. "Do you hear him? She'll come!—she'll come!"

And even as she spoke Dora's figure was seen by these two; she had heard, and, to her sorrow, obeyed the call.

"Is it not glorious!" cried Mrs. Luan, stamping in her glee, "to be thought a fool and an idiot, and to play them off so! He's clever, and so is Dora, and yet you see!—you see!"

Florence did not answer—she could not—she felt stupid with amazement and grief. She had still doubted, but now she saw it. If she not love Mr. Templemore with romantic affection, if Doctor Richard would have left her cold and unmoved, if she required Deenah, and Les Roches, and money, and its luxuries, to give warmth to her love, still that love existed—not deep, not disinterested, but real. That love, such as it was, now stung her to take such revenge as the present opportunity gave her.

"That will do," she whispered, "let us go, now; lead the way, and mind you never tell him."

"No, no," said Mrs. Luan, laughing. "Never fear, Flo, I shall never tell."

She led the way as Mrs. Logan bade her, and whilst she turned into the garden path, Florence abruptly entered the house, and opening the door of the school-room, burst in upon Dora and Mr. Templemore. Her clothes were dripping with rain, her face was pale as death, her eyes sparkled with jealous fury.

"I beg your pardon," she said, with a short laugh. "I am very rude, I know, but I for-

got something here—a handkerchief, I believe—and so I came back for it. So sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Templemore—and you, too, Miss Courtenay, but I could not help it, you see."

Amazement kept them both mute. Her unexpected appearance, her looks, her tones, were both menacing and mysterious.

"Florence, what is this?" at length asked Mr. Templemore, going up to her.

Mrs. Logan laughed in his face.

"Sorry to interrupt your *tête-à-tête* with Miss Courtenay," she said; "but I really could not help it, Mr. Templemore—besides, it was raining outside, you know."

Mr. Templemore could not believe his ears or his eyes. Was this the gentle, playful Florence, this pale woman whose looks of jealous fury were bent now upon him—now upon Dora? His kitten had now turned into a fierce young tigress; and even in the confusion and dismay of the moment, he had a keen sense of horror and disgust as he saw the ugly transformation. Even then that absence of moral beauty, which was the want of Mrs. Logan's pretty face, though habitual good-humor concealed it, was visible to him; the low brow, though so fair, the sensual mouth, though so lovely, the ungenerous countenance that could look so sweet, were all revealed to him in one moment, and they filled him with mingled anger and grief. There was resentment, there was a sort of contempt, there was ill-subdued scorn in his voice as he said:

"Florence, this is too much—this is too much!"

"So I think," replied Mrs. Logan, nodding at him—"so I think," and she nodded at Dora.

On seeing Florence enter—on hearing her first words, Dora had felt stunned, but now indignation roused her. She went up to Mrs. Logan, and in a low, even voice, she said:

"Mr. Templemore came here to see his

sick child; may I ask what you conclude thence?"

She stood before Mrs. Logan pale and somewhat imperious, but also looking as much beyond the reach of anything that could sully her honor as a regal lily on its stem. And as she spoke, she laid her hand on Mrs. Logan's arm, and she looked down in her face with a glance so proud and clear, that if Florence had not been very blind indeed, she must have read its meaning—but she did not.

"Conclude!" she ejaculated; "dear me, Miss Courtenay, I conclude nothing; only I do hope that your future husband, whoever he may be, will conclude nothing either from these midnight meetings."

On hearing this insult from the woman who had helped to send her brother to an early grave, Dora drew back and smiled with utter scorn; but the smile died away on her lips as the door opened, and answering Mr. Templemore's ring, Jacques and Fanny appeared on the threshold. For on seeing them Mrs. Logan laughed aloud; now, indeed, she held her revenge!

"Good-night, Mr. Templemore," she said in French; "I am sorry I interrupted your conversation with Miss Courtenay; but I am going away, so you will both have plenty of time."

She laughed scornfully, and left the room in a glow of vindictive triumph. Jacques and Fanny had both heard her; she had had her revenge. But she started back as she crossed the threshold, for she found Mrs. Luan, who had evidently been listening, and perhaps, too, waiting for her outside the room.

"I promised to see you home," said Mrs. Luan, grimly, "and I'll keep my word, I will—I will—are you ready?"

"No!" sharply replied Mrs. Logan; and going up to Miss Moore, who was coming down the staircase, having left the drawing-room in terror of the storm which was then

rolling above Les Roches, she said bitterly, "I have news for you, Miss Moore."

Mrs. Luan saw them enter the dining-room together, and stood awhile looking after them; then with as black a face as she had ever worn, she entered the school-room. Jacques was gone, but Fanny stood by Dora, who had sat down on a chair by the table, pale as death, and leaning her forehead on her hand.

"Miss Courtenay," said Mr. Templemore in a tone of much emotion, "Mrs. Logan shall apologize and retract. You shall have the fullest satisfaction!"

But Dora did not answer, or seem to hear him. She sat with her eyes fixed, her lips blanched.

"Disgraced!" she said in a low voice—"insulted and disgraced!"

"On my word, on my honor, you shall not suffer!" he insisted, with some energy. "There is no atonement you can suggest which shall not be made to you for this!"

"Atonement!" she repeated; "there is none. Oh! Mr. Templemore, your coming here has undone me!"

But he could not believe it—he would not.

"Who dare suspect you?" he asked, reddening with indignation; "you!—you, Miss Courtenay!—it is impossible!"

She did not answer—she could not argue. She was stunned with a blow so cruel and so unexpected. She felt faint, giddy, and powerless—her head sank on her bosom, her arms fell down by her sides, and if Mrs. Luan had not supported her she must have fallen.

"I cannot bear it!—I cannot!" she said, dreadingly. "Oh! my God, did I deserve this?"

Her despair touched Mr. Templemore's very heart. Every argument he could think of he used—every regret he could utter he now spoke. But for once he was powerless. Dora did not even hear him.

"Miss Courtenay," he said at length, with some vehemence, "I tell you that Mrs. Logan

must apologize. She has not left the house yet; I will see her at once."

"Mrs. Logan is gone," quickly said Mrs. Luan, looking rather scared.

"Gone in this storm?—she who is so mortally afraid of thunder and lightning? Impossible!"

And as Mr. Templemore uttered the words, he looked up sharply at Mrs. Luan. She had spoken with a vivacity which had surprised him; but even as he looked, the startled meaning passed from her face; it became, as ever, dull, cold, and vacant. "I suppose all this has excited her," he thought; and he thought no more, but left the school-room at once in search of Mrs. Logan. Mrs. Luan followed him with a furtive look, then, turning almost fiercely on Fanny, she said:

"What do you stay for? Go! go!"

She spoke so imperatively, that Fanny obeyed the mandate at once, and went down to the servants' room in some tremor, informing Jacques, in her broken French, that Miss Courtenay's aunt was in a dreadful way about all this.

"Well she may," sententiously said Jacques—"well she may, Mademoiselle Fauny."

Mrs. Luan, indeed, was rather stricken at the success of her plan—perhaps that success had exceeded her expectations. Dora sat as Mr. Templemore had left her, with her face buried in her hands, trying to measure the abyss into which she had fallen. But her eye shrank from these dark depths of shame which seemed to lie before her. If she could have seen an issue—a road to salvation—but none appeared.

Two servants had heard Mrs. Logan's insulting taunt. Would Mr. Templemore attempt to bribe them into silence?—could he do it?—was it not too late by this?—had not the story already been told in the kitchen? and thence would it not spread in ever-widening circles, until it encompassed her like a

sea? He had promised to atone. But atonement was not in his power. He was as helpless as she was; like her, he might stand and look on at the disastrous effect a few words had wrought; but the sluices had been opened, and by no mortal power could the waters be called back.

"Disgraced!" muttered Dora, removing her hands from her pale, distracted face—"disgraced! and forever. Aunt, aunt, I cannot bear it!—I must conquer this or die!"

"Dora," said her aunt, clinching her hands, and stammering from the agitation with which she spoke, "if Mr. Templemore does not do you justice—if he does not marry you, I—I will make him repent it."

When our own mood is overwrought and excited, we wonder at nothing. Dora heard her aunt, and understood her, but she neither remonstrated with nor minded the threat. It sounded like mere angry raving, and did not even startle her. Later, when the secret of her sad story was laid bare to her, she remembered the words but too well. The only thought they now suggested was the desperate one—"Justice!—how can he do me justice? I am undone forever, and he can only look on and see it."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE sound of voices guided Mr. Templemore to the dining-room, and told him he should find Florence there. But though he came to work Dora's justification, he also came in an angry and indignant mood. He still felt both amazed and exasperated at Mrs. Logan's insulting intrusion. What right had she to come thus upon him in the most private hours of his life, and put evil construction on his most innocent actions? A wife could not do more, and many a wife would be too proud to do as much. But when he opened the dining-room door—when he saw Florence

thrown back in a chair, weeping passionately, and Miss Moore bending pityingly over her, his dark face relaxed even as his heart relented. She was unjust and cruel, she was silly and heartless, but she was still the woman whom he had loved a year, and whom he was to marry in a few weeks. On seeing him, she started up, and her eyes flashed.

"Go back to Miss Courtenay!" she said—"go back!"

"You persist in that insult!" he exclaimed, angrily. "Florence! Florence!" he added, more calmly, "do not!—think of Miss Courtenay's position, and do not!"

"*You* think of her, Mr. Templemore—you think of her!"

"And why should I not think of her?" he asked, with much indignation; "why not, Mrs. Logan? If you disgrace her, do you suffer for it in the world's esteem? Why, moreover, should I not think of a lady who is under my roof and under my protection, to whom I have confided my only child, and to whose care of her I am so deeply indebted?"

"Then, Mr. Templemore, I may as well tell you," replied Mrs. Logan, stung by the tone in which he spoke of Dora, "that if I consent to marry you after what has passed, you must give up Miss Courtenay."

"You cannot be in earnest."

"I am quite in earnest, I assure you."

She spoke with a pretty, foolish toss of her little head, which allayed Mr. Templemore's anger, not because he felt tempted to yield to her, but because it reminded him that she was so childish—namely, so silly.

"Florence," he said, gravely, "you thus ask me to acknowledge to you what I must ever deny, for it is not true; and worse still, to join you in giving the last blow to Miss Courtenay's reputation; whereas it is you who, in common justice, must retract and apologize; and she must stay in Les Roches as Eva's governess—she must, if it were only for her justification."

Mrs Logan laughed ironically.

"You must think me foolish indeed," she said, nodding at Mr. Templemore, "if you think I will put up with that. No, Mr Templemore, Miss Courtenay shall leave your house to-morrow—to-morrow, do you hear?—or you have seen your last of me!"

He looked at her incredulous, amazed, and indignant.

"How basely you must think of me!" he said, in great scorn; "why, even if I were as guilty as you think me, I could not act so without dishonor—I could not turn out of my house the girl whom I had disgraced, without adding a second betrayal to the first. Innocent or guilty, Miss Courtenay shall stay in Les Roches!"

"Then you confess it—you prefer her to me!" cried Florence—"you confess it!"

"I prefer justice and honor to you, as I would prefer them to my own life," he vehemently replied. "But, Florence," he added, more calmly, "let us drop this. Once for all, believe me when I tell you that I have no feeling save regard and friendship for Miss Courtenay. Once for all, believe me when I tell you that she is a proud and reserved girl, incapable, I will not say of wrong, but of the mingled lightness and folly you so gratuitously lay to her door."

Mrs. Logan was staggered. But the frivolous and the weak are incapable of greatness under any of its many aspects. Ask them not for strong love, for generous construction, or pure, simple faith. In vain Florence had known Dora from her youth, and Mr. Templemore for the last year—her standard for judging them was herself, and this was neither rigid nor lofty. If she had been a poor girl, she could have flirted with a rich man in the hope of supplanting another woman, and for the mere gratification of her vanity; and if she had been a rich woman, she would no more have scrupled sacrificing a poor girl

to her amusement, than Florence Gale had scrupled sacrificing Dora Courtenay's brother to her interest. Nobleness and truth were not in her, and she could not conceive them in others.

"What brought Miss Courtenay down to the school-room?" she asked, mistrustfully.

"I called her."

"And what took you there, Mr. Templemore?"

"I went, thinking Eva was ill," he gravely replied.

"And what made you think Eva was ill?" she persisted. "I suppose she sent for you?"

Mr. Templemore's dark eyes flashed.

"Mrs. Logan," he said, "I do not ask how and why you came to Les Roches this evening. I suppose I have faithless servants—spies on my privacy, who can be seduced from the duty they owe me. These are questions I scorn to put; but I ask this, will you have faith in me?"

"Not if Miss Courtenay stays, Mr. Templemore."

He looked troubled and much moved.

"Florence, I never knew you to be cruel and relentless; you are a woman, have some feeling for another woman—have some feeling for me, and do not lay upon me such an alternative."

His voice was tender and pleading, but Mrs. Logan could not, or would not, understand its real meaning. She only felt that Dora was in her power at last, and she would show no mercy.

"Let Miss Courtenay go," she said. "I ask for no more."

"Then you are resolved."

"Quite resolved."

For a moment he looked at her in grave and silent displeasure; when he spoke, it was to say:

"Be it so; but remember, it is your doing, not mine."

"Oh! I am quite willing to assume the responsibility," cavalierly replied Mrs. Logan.

"Remember that if we now part forever, it is you who break your pledge to me, not I who violate my promise to you."

He bowed gravely, then left the room without adding another word.

Mrs. Logan remained stunned at the consequences of her own act. To the last moment she had thought that Mr. Templemore was yielding; to the last moment she had felt convinced that he neither dared to give her up, nor had the power to do so. She had never imagined that he would thus take her at her word.

"Oh! Mrs. Logan, Mrs. Logan!" cried Miss Moore, with uplifted hands.

"Don't you think he will come back?" asked Florence, looking at her in great consternation.

"No," replied that lady, with dismay in her face, "I am sure he will not!"

Mrs. Logan looked piteous. The first violence of her anger was spent, and a sort of repentance was entering her heart. She was not sorry that she had insulted Mr. Templemore, and wronged Dora; but she felt deeply sorry at having injured Mrs. Logan, and she was inclined to repair whatever damage that lady might have sustained in her worldly and matrimonial prospects.

"What am I to do?" she asked, wringing her hands. "Please to send for him, Miss Moore."

Miss Moore rang at once. Jacques answered the bell, and went for Mr. Templemore; but the owner of Les Roches was not to be found. Florence scarcely waited for the man to leave the room, in order to exclaim that "Mr. Templemore did it on purpose, and that she was perfectly miserable."

Miss Moore attempted to put in a word, and was at once silenced.

"What takes him out at this hour, and in

this weather?" asked Mrs. Logan, angrily. "He wants to show me it is all over. Well, let him, Miss Moore—let him!"

"My dear Mrs. Logan, it is not all over; but I dare say Mr. Templemore is angry. Only depend upon it you were mistaken. If you were to see Miss Courtenay," she added, timidly, "you might come to an understanding with her."

"And beg her pardon!" replied Mrs. Logan, laughing scornfully.

"But, my dear Mrs. Logan," urged Miss Moore, "you really must be mistaken in all this?"

Mrs. Logan turned upon her.

"Had you ever heard that he went up that staircase to see Eva? Never; you told me so. Then don't you see it was kept a mystery on purpose. If there was no harm in it, why did not the whole world know about it, Miss Moore—just tell me that?"

She spoke so angrily that Miss Moore did not venture to answer. Nevertheless, some impression had been produced on Mrs. Logan's mind, for she stood silent and sullen, brooding over her case.

"I wish I had not spoken opposite the servants," she thought; "that is why, perhaps, he won't give up Dora. She would never have committed such a false step. Not she. She is too clever and too keen. I wonder if I could find out the truth from her. Keen though she is, she never could hide anything from me. If I have wronged her, I can just kiss her, and say something about Paul; and if she has wronged me, she shall quake still further for her fair name, and feel that she is at my mercy, spite all her cleverness and her grand ways."

"I shall go and speak to Miss Courtenay," she said shortly. And the tone in which she addressed Miss Moore, implied, "Stay where you are."

Miss Moore meekly submitted, whilst Mrs.

Logan, wrapping her cloak around her, and looking as defiant as an injured queen, crossed the hall, and entered the school-room, where Dora now sat alone with her aunt. But her whole aspect changed as she closed the door, and Dora looked up slowly. Forestalling attack, Mrs. Logan burst into tears. They came at her command, and without hypocrisy or deceit, she wept as easily as children weep and quite as sincerely.

"Oh! Dora—Dora," she sobbed, "how could you do it?—how could you? I have been engaged to Mr. Templemore so long—how could you do it?"

Dora looked at her very coldly; but no word of justification or denial passed her lips.

"I know I am hasty and foolish," sobbed Mrs. Logan, "and that even though I saw you both with my own eyes I should not have said it; but, Dora, say there was no harm in it, and I will believe you—only what could take him to the school-room at that hour?"

Dora's lip curled with scorn, but she was silent.

"For your own sake you ought to tell," said Mrs. Logan a little angrily; "how do you expect me to justify you, and say it was all a mistake, if I know nothing?"

"My good name is not in your power," replied Dora, with a swelling heart. "I am not at your mercy, Mrs. Logan!"

"Then it is true!" cried Mrs. Logan, with unconquerable jealousy; "then you did mean to flirt with him, and perhaps to supplant me!"

Dora turned red and pale.

"Mrs. Logan, may I ask if you came here to say this?" she said.

"I came to know the truth, and I will know it!" desperately cried Mrs. Logan. "Dora, tell me, you must; I must know how far matters have gone between you and Mr. Templemore. Tell me—tell me! You are to marry John, I know; tell me the truth, and he shall

never know anything—I'll deny all to him; but tell me, and promise not to see Mr. Templemore any more. Oh! Dora, I am wretched, and I must be happy again!"

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

A sublime precept, but hard—very hard to put in practice. Dora could not forgive that light, frivolous creature, who went through life taking all its sweetness, and leaving all its bitterness to others; who, after helping to break her brother's heart, after doing all she could to rob her of fair name, now asked her victim to help her back to happiness! And what was Mrs. Logan's happiness to Dora Courtenay? Must she not leave Mr. Templemore's house a penniless and, though she had denied it, a disgraced girl? And it was the woman who had done this—Mr. Templemore's future wife—who dared to plead her happiness as an argument!

She rose and looked at her in silent indignation.

"Tell you!" she said at length—"tell you what, Mrs. Logan? That I am not base—that I am not shameless! You ask me to tell you that? Have you, then, forgotten the past? Have you forgotten Paul Courtenay? and is it his sister whom of all women you dare to treat thus? If to say a word to you could right me in the face of all, I would not utter that word. Go to Mr. Templemore and put what questions you please. He perhaps owes you an answer; I do not, and will give you none."

"Then it is not true that Eva was ill? Perhaps you were ill, Miss Courtenay!" added Mrs. Logan, stung at Dora's cold, haughty face.

"Since you only came to insult me, I shall withdraw," quietly said Dora; and she left the room as she spoke.

Mrs. Luan, who had been silent till then, now went up to Mrs. Logan, and taking her by

both wrists, she looked at her with sparkling, angry eyes.

"How dare you speak opposite the servants?—how dare you!" she asked, and opening the door, she dragged her out of the room into the hall with ruthless force. Florence, paralyzed for fear, could neither scream nor speak. "How dare you speak opposite the servants?" asked Mrs. Luan.

The light in the hall shone on her angry face. Florence shut her eyes not to see it.

"Let me go!" she gasped; "you hurt me—let me go!"

"Hurt you!" said Mrs. Luan, looking much incensed; "did you dare to say that I hurt you?—what next, eh?"

Mrs. Logan opened her eyes, then shut them again, not to see that wrathful countenance.

"Let me go!" she said—"let me go!"

"I'll tell you what," began Mrs. Luan, tightening her hold of her victim, "I know what you mean; but if you dare to say it, I'll kill you! I will—I will!" she repeated.

But suddenly her hold relaxed. Mrs. Logan looked up; she was free, and Mrs. Luan stood two paces from her humming a tune. Miss Moore's appearance at the end of the hall had wrought that marvel. Mrs. Logan rushed up and clung to her.

"Miss Moore!" she gasped, "the storm is over; and Mrs. Luan—"

"Shall I go home with you?" kindly asked Mrs. Luan, going up to her; "I am not afraid of the storm. Let me go with you, Mrs. Logan."

"No, no!" replied Florence, with a shudder of fear; but not daring to continue the accusation she had begun, she resumed hurriedly, "the storm is over, and I really wish to go; will you send Jacques—any one with me, Miss Moore?"

"I shall go and call him," said Miss Moore, attempting to move, but Florence held her so

tightly that she could not stir. Seeing Miss Moore's amazed look, and Mrs. Luan's grim smile of triumph, she recovered composure enough to say:

"Yes, pray call Jacques—and let me go with you—I cannot bear being alone."

"I'll stay with you," again kindly said Mrs. Luan.

"Thank you," replied Florence. "Here is Jacques, I believe. Good-night, Miss Moore—good-night."

She was gone in a moment. Miss Moore looked at Mrs. Luan.

"Mrs. Luan," she said, "can you make out all this?"

Mrs. Luan looked cunning, and tapped her forehead mysteriously.

"My goodness!" cried Miss Moore; "but that is impossible!"

"Why so?" coolly asked Mrs. Luan. "It's in the family, you know. Did you never see it?"

"Never."

"I did—long ago—oh! so long ago! I knew her when she was a child, you know."

And she walked away, leaving Miss Moore confounded at so strange an allegation, and to which, however, the violent and unreasonable conduct of Florence gave a sort of likelihood. Mrs. Luan looked very calm till she reached her room; but when she was in it, when she heard the iron gates of Les Roches close on Mrs. Logan, she laughed exultingly. How well she had done it, and how that poor, foolish gull had taken it all in!

"She will not come back to Les Roches," thought Mrs. Luan, nodding in her triumph, "not she! And so she thought I was mad!—and Miss Moore thinks she is mad! Oh, dear! oh, dear! to think these women should be so foolish!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

MRS. COURTENAY was sitting alone in the dining-room the next morning, with a pensive and melancholy look, when Dora entered it. Not one, so far as Mrs. Courtenay could learn, had taken any breakfast that morning. She could not understand it, and at once applied to her daughter for information.

"What is the matter, Dora?" she asked. "Miss Moore has a headache, says Fanny; Mr. Templemore is out, says Jacques; Mrs. Luan has locked herself in her room. No one seems to want to eat to-day!"

"Have you had any breakfast, mamma?" asked Dora, wistfully.

"I took a cup of tea; but I felt so lonely that I took no more."

Dora laid her hand on Mrs. Courtenay's shoulder, and looked down sadly in her face.

"I let you sleep last night," she said, "but I must tell you this morning. We must leave Les Roches. I have already seen Madame Bertrand, and settled every thing for our return to her; we go to-day—nay, at once. Mr. Templemore is out, and all can be over before he returns."

Mrs. Courtenay stared in mute amazement, whilst calmly, almost coldly, Dora told her what had happened. At first Mrs. Courtenay seemed unable to understand her daughter; but suddenly the case, in all its bearings, was made plain to her.

"Dora," she exclaimed, rising and looking rigid, "did you say she insulted you opposite the servants?"

"Yes, and in French, lest Jacques should not understand. Oh! pray let us make haste and leave this house!—pray do!"

But so prompt a resolve was not in Mrs. Courtenay's power. Leave Les Roches and its comforts! Leave the happy, easy life, for the old life of makeshifts and poverty, and leave

it with the additional burden of disgrace! It was too hard a fate! It could not be!

"But, Dora," she argued, "what if Mrs. Logan saw you and Mr. Templemore in the school-room? You were not alone with him?"

"Yes, I was," replied her daughter. "Aunt and I sat up with Eva, who was flushed and excited. Aunt went for Mr. Templemore, it seems; but I was alone when he came."

"Then it is all wrong—all wrong!" moaned Mrs. Courtenay; "and I do not know what we shall do, Dora! I thought you would marry him, and now it ends so dreadfully—so very dreadfully!"

Dora stood near the dining-room window. She leaned her throbbing forehead against the cold glass. Marry him!—yes, long ago she too had indulged in the folly of that dream. Marry him!—and she must leave his house disgraced, and the woman who wrought her ruin would marry him in three weeks. Oh! it was very hard, and how cruel all this lingering seemed to her now! But it did not last—it could not. Mrs. Courtenay indulged in a few more moans and ejaculations; then anger and pride suddenly taking the place of grief, she informed her daughter that Mr. Templemore's conduct was shameful—shameful!—and that they must not stay another minute in his house.

"I am only sorry," continued Mrs. Courtenay, looking dignified, "that I took that cup of tea. If I had known what I know now, I would have died first; and as we cannot possibly stay to luncheon, I shall get ready at once."

Dora, who had spent part of the night in packing, went up and helped her mother. Everything was soon ready. Mrs. Luan came in and stared at her in sullen silence. She did indeed attempt to remonstrate once, but Dora, rising from her stooping posture, looked up at her, and seeing that her mother was not in the room, said, gravely:

"Aunt, who did this?"

"You are a fool to leave the house," sulkily answered Mrs. Luan; but she said no more, and after a while walked back to her own room.

When all was ready, Dora went to Eva's room. The child was still fast asleep. She bent over her, but did not dare to kiss her, lest she should waken.

"Oh! Eva, Eva," she thought, with her eyes full of tears, "is it because you cost me so dear that it seems so hard to leave you?"

"Dora," said her mother's voice outside.

"I am going," and she went.

When events have reached a certain crisis, they speed as quickly as a stone rolling downhill. Later in the day, when she thought over all this, it seemed to Dora that some whirlwind had swept her away from Mr. Templemore's house. She could scarcely believe everything was over when she entered those rooms which she had left six months before, gay and hopeful. She heeded neither her mother's laments, nor her aunt's angry ejaculations at the course events had taken; she went to her room, and sitting down there, tried again to look her future in the face. Alas! again she found that she could not.

There is something intolerable to the proud in the mere thought of disgrace. Life, Dora felt, was a burden now, and death would be a sort of relief. She had that comfort, though she could not feel it in her dark hour, that death would close her story, and end it in forgetfulness. But she did not think of that. I wonder, indeed, if we really ever appreciate the blessing of obscurity? I wonder if we realize the pangs of a Mary Stuart or a Marie Antoinette at her fatal celebrity? That black shadow, which time can never remove from the name of either, and of which both, innocent or guilty, must have been conscious, surely added bitterness to the prison, and gave a keener pang to the scaffold. Who will dare to

swear that the daughter of Maria Theresa was stainless in the matter of the necklace, or that the Scottish queen did not betray and murder her husband? Historians are not agreed yet—what can the vulgar do? Who shall search up evidence for or against either lady, weigh it carefully, and ascertain the value of documents, forged or real? The task would take a lifetime, and the world has scarce an hour to give. The present and the future are arrayed against the past, and in the broad noonday of one, and the coming dawn of the other, we forget that long sad night, which with every day grows deeper and longer, and in which the illustrious dead lie sleeping. Oh! if we could hear it through the tumult of past generations, surely an appeal, piteous and despairing, is crying to us from the Temple or Fotheringay for justice and belief. "Have faith in me," it says; "do not believe that I could be so guilty. Reekon my sorrows, look at their tragic close, and absolve me!" Alas! we cannot. We are perplexed, like Othello, and no Emilia raises her indignant voice to convince us. We go on speculating, wondering, doubting—now leaning to that side, now to this, until we grow weary, and turn our vexed minds to more congenial themes.

As we deal with them, and others like them, so the world deals with us when appearances condemn us, and this a bitter intuition told Dora. Oh! if she had thought that the world would believe her! But she did not. She had not made the attempt, and she already shrank from it disheartened. She saw not one remedy to her evil. Her condemnation was lifelong, and the most she could hope for was that, once life was over, the world might forget her. Sad, bitter comfort was this! For, after all, it is doubtful if the royal ladies we have just mentioned would have exchanged their dolorous renown for a cold oblivion. They might have thought it better to be remembered, even in doubt and scorn, than,

after filling the world with their name and their sorrows, to be utterly forgotten.

"And there is no hope for me—none!—none!" thought Dora, forgetting that in the most desperate cases there is always hope. "Mrs. Logan will go on asserting that I am guilty, and no one will believe Mr. Templemore's denial. To stay in his house would have condemned me, and to leave it condemns me—there is no hope! At every turn of my life that slander will meet me!"

Mr. Templemore, too, was hopeless, for he felt powerless. He stayed out two hours and more that morning, vainly seeking a remedy and finding none—none, at least, that his own unaided will could compass. To Florence he would appeal no more. His resentment against her was too strong and too deep. He was wronged in his love, and wounded in his pride and honor; he closed his heart upon her in anger, and resolved to abide by the sentence she had passed upon him. But if Mrs. Logan would not retract, would Miss Courtenay be patient? He doubted it, and that he must not hope for it he learned on his return. He had scarcely crossed the gates of Les Roches when he was overtaken by Miss Moore, who was also coming in.

"It is all right," she said, eagerly—"all right, Mr. Templemore."

"All right?" he repeated.

"Oh! yes, I have just seen Mrs. Logan, and on learning that Miss Courtenay was gone, she relented quite."

Mr. Templemore stood still, and looked black as night. "Miss Courtenay is gone!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, she would go with her mother and aunt. I did all I could to keep her, of course, but she would go. And if it were not that poor Eva is crying her eyes out, and Fido whining so dreadfully, I should say it is all for the best; for, of course, since that was all Mrs. Logan wanted—"

"Mrs. Logan is not the mistress of this house yet," angrily interrupted Mr. Templemore. "She may have succeeded in driving Miss Courtenay out of it by the grossest insult one woman can inflict on another, but there her triumph ends, Miss Moore!"

"I am sure she is sorry—very sorry," said Miss Moore, rather crestfallen.

"Is she? Then let her prove it. Let her apologize and retract—but she will do neither. When she came to this house last night—and what brought her?—she came resolved to ruin Miss Courtenay. How did she come in?—who let her in? Some servant whom she had bribed. Be it so. I scorn the means and the act equally!"

"I tried to find it out," candidly said Miss Moore, "but she always put me off. She seemed afraid to tell."

"Not afraid, but ashamed," replied Mr. Templemore, with a stern smile; "and so she well might be. That act alone would divide us. Did Miss Courtenay leave no message for me?"

"There is a letter in your study. But, indeed, Mr. Templemore, poor Mrs. Logan is to be pitied. I am sure she is heart-broken."

Mr. Templemore was silent awhile. Love felt cold and dead; but he was to have married Florence in three weeks, and he could not forget that. He was free in honor, but still the tie which had been so strong the day before was not quite broken.

"I shall write to her," he said aloud.

"Perhaps, if you were to see her," suggested Miss Moore. "You know how impulsive dear Florence is. Suppose she gets angry again—thinking a letter too cold—and writes a hasty reply, meaning the contrary all the time? Then it would be all wrong again, you see."

But Mr. Templemore looked as if he could bear the fate thus held forth for his admonition.

"I shall write to her," he said again. And

he went to his study at once, as if resolved not to argue the case further.

Dora's letter was brief, such a letter as Mr. Templemore expected. He read it twice over, then he sat down and wrote, not one letter, but two. He addressed Dora first. She had asked of him to make no attempt to see her; and severe and unjustifiable though he considered that request, he remembered that she had been cruelly wronged, and he would not violate it. But every argument he could think of to make her alter her resolve he used, and he concluded with a prayer.

"Do not compel me to feel," he said, "that the saddest day in your life was that on which you met Doctor Richard in Monsieur Merand's shop!"

"And now," he thought, when this letter lay closed and sealed before him, "I must write to Florence."

There had been a time when the task was not an effort; silly though his pretty mistress was, he had once found it delightful to lay the fairest flowers of his fancy at her little feet. But now that time was over, and with a sad and heavy heart Mr. Templemore felt it would never return. No, never again would she be dear as she had been. Pity and pride, not love, made him relent toward her. No woman to whom he had been bound so closely should tax him with obstinate and ungenerous resentment; but forgiveness is not affection, and there was secret bitterness in Mr. Templemore's heart as, taking up the pen he had laid down on finishing his letter to Dora, he addressed Mrs. Logan. He wrote no reproaches, on his wrongs he was silent; but he spoke of Dora's, calmly, dispassionately, and like one convinced of Mrs. Logan's regret for what had passed, and of her wish to repair the evil she had wrought. He did not ask her to do this, he left her free; but he implied very plainly—that on these terms alone was perfect reconciliation possible.

When this task was accomplished—and how bitter and painful it had been, Mrs. Logan never knew—Mr. Templemore, with a sigh of relief, went to seek Eva in the school-room. He found the child half ill with a grief he could not remove. He could take her on his knee, caress her, and wipe away her tears, but he could not promise that Dora should return. His fate was not in his own hands. A child's perverse jealousy, a silly woman's folly, had laid his life waste for the time being; ruined every hope, every plan, and left nothing but sorrow behind them. But, alas! for Mrs. Logan, he felt very lenient toward the culprit who sat on his knee, clasped in his embrace, with her head on his shoulder, and very severe toward the other sinner, who now read his letter with a flushed face and a quivering lip.

He felt severe, perhaps, because in that room he could not help thinking so much of Dora. Her vacant chair, her books, the handkerchief she was embroidering, and which she had forgotten on the table, were mute appeals that roused Mr. Templemore's indignation anew. He remembered this bright girl at the Musée; he remembered her looking as radiant and as joyous as sunshine in her poor home; and thinking of the pale face he had seen last night, of the tears he could imagine, of the humiliation and shame that were her lot now, and of his powerlessness to do her justice, he could scarcely restrain his mingled grief and anger.

"And when will Cousin Dora come back?" plaintively asked Eva.

"Heaven knows, not I," he bitterly answered. "I, have done my best, Eva, and man can do no more."

How that best fared, Mr. Templemore learned the same evening, when the post brought him two letters. He was sitting with Eva in the school-room, hearing her through her French lesson when they came.

"Put them there," said Mr. Templemore to Jacques.

They were laid on the table before him, these two letters in delicate female hands, which held his fate in their satin folds. He looked at them a little moodily as the child read on, about Eucharis and Telemachus, and the grief of Calypso at the flight of Ulysses.

"What has placed me at the mercy of these two women?" he thought, with a sort of angry wonder. "Why should the folly of the one and the pride of the other make a slave of me?"

"Did I not read well?" asked Eva, shutting the book, and looking robbed of her meed of praise, "Cousin Dora says I read very well."

"So you do—go and play with Fanny now."

Eva went, and whilst she and Fanny played at hide-and-seek in front of the school-room, Mr. Templemore took up Mrs. Logan's letter and broke the seal. It was the shortest epistle he had ever received from that lady, for it did not extend beyond the direction on the envelope in which she returned his own letter unanswered. Mr. Templemore colored deeply, then turned rather pale; but he lit a match and burned both letter and envelope at once on the hearth. He looked at the shrivelled scroll in mingled scorn and wonder. "And so that is the end," he thought; "that is the end! If I would only let her ruin Miss Courtenay utterly, she would forgive my supposed infidelity; but I would not, and she finds it easier to give me up than to renounce her vengeance. The burden of love in that scale was so light, that it will not stand a feather's weight in the other. Be it so, and let Mrs. Logan abide by the fate she has chosen." He felt so calm, that he could not help wondering at himself; but it was so. He could think of this final parting between himself and Florence as if they had been two strangers, and look on it as impartially. Yet,

cold though he was, something he felt, for he long forgot Dora's letter. His look falling on it by chance, suddenly reminded him of its existence. It was a plain and brief denial. It was free from complaint of wrong, it spoke no reproach, but it uttered a cold and inexorable "No" to all Mr. Templemore's offers and entreaties.

"A proud woman!—a very proud woman!" thought Mr. Templemore; "but she too must abide by the fate she has chosen."

When Eva, tired with play, and still doleful at Cousin Dora's loss, came in to her father, she found another letter shrivelling up into black ashes on the hearth.

"When is Cousin Dora coming back?" she asked, plaintively.

Before Mr. Templemore could answer, a little tremulous whine from the garden proclaimed that Fido joined in the question.

"You must both do without Cousin Dora," answered Mr. Templemore, almost impatiently, and taking his hat he walked out. It was almost night, and Mr. Templemore went down the road to Rouen, with slow and irresolute steps. He looked at Mrs. Logan's villa as he passed by it; the shutters were shut—Mrs. Logan was gone. That chapter in his life was ended. "Be it so," he thought defiantly; "it is her doing—not mine." And he went on. He entered the city, he went to Monsieur Merand's shop, and bought an old enamel from the dealer, but with so stern and forbidding a look did he drive his bargain, that it was only when he was leaving, Monsieur Merand took heart to say:

"Why, Doctor Richard, you look as bad as the young lady!"

Mr. Templemore, who already stood on the threshold of the shop, turned round angrily, and sharply said—

"What young lady, Monsieur Merand?"

"Oh! the one who used to draw, you know. I saw her stealing out of Notre

Dame this evening, and looking as white as a ghost."

Mr. Templemore did not answer, but walked away. The man could mean nothing, for he could know nothing; but why was he to be thus persecuted with Dora's name? He did not return to Les Roches at once. He went to his old house and put away his purchases. It was dark night now; and looking at the opposite side of the street, he saw a light burning in Madame Bertrand's first-floor windows; but one, that of Dora's room, remained dark. It was open, and he could catch a glimpse of a pale figure within, sitting in a bending and motionless attitude. He watched her for an hour and more—she never stirred; and when Mr. Templemore at length turned away, grief, pity, and indignation filled his heart. But he was powerless, and he knew it.

"I can do nothing—nothing," he said to himself again and again.

"Oh! Mr. Templemore. Mrs. Logan is gone!" exclaimed Miss Moore, in a voice full of woe as he entered Les Roches. "But she is not far—she is to sleep at Dieppe to-night."

Mr. Templemore's only answer to this speech was, "How is Eva?"

"Asleep, I believe."

He went up to Eva's room. A night-lamp burned on the table; its light fell on Eva's little cot. Mr. Templemore sat down and looked at the child. She had cried herself to sleep, and her cheek was still wet with tears.

"It would be better for Eva if I had never brought Miss Courtenay here," thought Mr. Templemore, rather sadly; "she will get over this sorrow, of course, but she must suffer first, and suffer keenly."

He felt much troubled. The child's grief pained him; and the sad, motionless figure he had seen in Dora's room pained him still more deeply. How different from that stricken one was the Dora whom he remembered sitting in that now vacant chair before him, with the

blue ribbon tying her bright hair, and the light shining on her young face as she told Eva little fairy-tales! Her look, her smile, the very turn of her neck, the very sound of her voice, came back to him with strange vividness. He would rather have forgotten them, for they were painful, and he still felt, "I can do nothing;" but Dora's image returned again and again, and would not be denied. It returned radiant, happy, and young, with no trace of pain or trouble on its brow, filling that dull, gloomy room with its brightness, and smiling down so tenderly on the sleeping child, that the very heart of Mr. Templemore thrilled within him.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THERE is no consolation for some sorrows. Neither Mrs. Courtenay nor Mrs. Luan attempted to comfort Dora. She did not complain—not a word of murmur passed her lips. She moved about the house, pale as death, indeed, but bearing her fate in mute resignation, or what seemed as much. Of the future, of her plans, if she had any, she did not speak. She sat a good deal in her room, sewing assiduously. Unless early in the morning, she could not summon heart to go out. She had no need to visit the Picture-Gallery now. Besides, her story must be known in Rouen by this—the story of the girl whom Mr. Templemore's future wife had upbraided with folly and shame. She was sitting in her room by the open window, within the shadow of the muslin curtain, as this thought came. Her story!—there had been a time when she had none; and now her name could be in every mouth, and be there with pity or with scorn. Madame Bertrand would have to fight her battles, and justify her with her shrill tongue—how abhorrent the thought was!—or shrinkingly excuse her on the score of inexperience.

Dora's needle flagged as she thought of this. She looked at the old gray church, at the lilies once more in bloom, at the broken image of the bishop, at the lame teacher's window, at the quiet street below, and she remembered how she had felt when she had seen these first. Surely our life is like a wide land, with streams, and rivers, and seas, that divide it in separate and distinct portions. Surely joy or grief is there, as pleasant or troubled waters that flow in different channels. Surely our happy days have nothing in common with our days of tribulation or sorrow? Dora felt as if she could have borne any thing better than this trouble. Death—lost love had not the same pangs as this bitter humiliation. Death is the human lot, and lost love a frequent calamity; but women who know themselves stainless do not expect shame, and cannot well accept it. In vain Dora thought: "I suppose plenty have been slandered besides me; it is a cross which I must bear. She was a rebel in her heart, and could not, or, rather, would not, endure it. Intolerable seemed her fate—intolerable and unjust. She forbade her thoughts to question Providence; but what thought does not, the heart will often do. This was not her only sorrow. Her keenest pang sprang, perhaps, from the fact that she might and should have foreseen this. She should never have gone to Mr. Templemore's house. Her very love for him should have kept her away. Trouble was sure to spring from it. Fair though its opening looked, that episode of her life could not end otherwise than in darkness. There is a beautiful picture by one of the old masters which shows us the child Jesus calmly sleeping on his cross. There is no grief, no care in that childish face, divine even in its repose. The cross is small, like the tender naked limbs which rest upon it. But it will grow to man's length, and we, who know the later story, the *via dolorosa* which ended on Calvary to purchase

our redemption—we cannot gaze on that childish cross without sorrow.

Thus, though we know it not, is many a human life, of which we only see the beginning, and cannot divine the close. The cross is there—the cross which will grow with the growth of that life, and from which it can never more be divided; the cross which it must bear up some spiritual Golgotha, and to which it is nailed at last, sometimes in shame, or what the world deems such—ever in grief. But what we who look on cannot always see is often known to the sufferer; early pangs reveal the future agony. To feel love for one who does not return our affection, and yet seek that being's dear society, is to court our own destruction. Virtue, peace, or fair name is imperilled, and one must certainly perish. This Dora knew, and the knowledge of her own wrong-doing stung her.

Mrs. Courtenay gazed very wistfully at her daughter whenever she joined them; but Dora's countenance, once so expressive, was now silent. She would not complain, and she forbade her looks all language. Mrs. Courtenay could scarcely repress her tears, and Mrs. Luan was more sullen than ever; but Dora's face gave no sign. She was cold and impassive, as if all sensibility had left her.

Thus she was the first day, and on the morrow, and on the next day again. Thus she was for a week, save that her pale face got paler and more rigid—that her eyes sank, and that her whole aspect gave terrible indication of the cruel strife within. If she had complained, it would have been better; if she had murmured and repined from morning till night, it would have been best of all. But not once, from the moment she left Les Roches, did her lips part to utter so much as "My lot is hard." Perhaps she was silent because her full heart would have made her say too much; perhaps if she had spoken she could not have hidden the passion which was at the

root of all her woe; better, then, be mute, than display to any eye the weakness and the folly which had brought down all this.

She sat thus on the evening of the seventh day with her mother and her aunt, when all three started as a man's step came up the staircase. Mrs. Courtenay and her sister-in-law exchanged looks, but, ere they had well recovered, Dora had risen and entered her room. Its door was closing as Mr. Templemore opened the other door and entered the room where Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan sat alone.

"She heard me, and left for that reason," he thought, casting a quick look round the room.

"Pray take a seat, Mr. Templemore," said Mrs. Courtenay, looking a little flurried.

"Why did Miss Courtenay go?" he asked.

"She has a bad headache," began Mrs. Courtenay.

"She has not!" bluntly interrupted Mrs. Luan; "but she would not see Mr. Templemore."

"And why would she not see me, Mrs. Luan?"

"Indeed, Mr. Templemore," here remarked Mrs. Courtenay, "my daughter has been cruelly used, and I think you know it."

"Heaven knows how keenly I feel it," replied Mr. Templemore. "But, Mrs. Courtenay, I wish you could induce your daughter to hear me—just for a few moments."

"I shall try," said Mrs. Luan, and she went in to Dora. Mr. Templemore waited in silence for her reappearance; but when the door, which had closed behind her, opened again, and she came forth alone, it needed not her clouded face to tell him that Dora had refused to see him.

"She says she cannot," sullenly said Mrs. Luan, sitting down once more, and evidently both dissatisfied and disappointed.

"No, of course she cannot," querulously re-

marked Mrs. Courtenay; "and so, Mr. Templemore, please to come no more. I am very sorry to be so inhospitable, after all your kindness, but I do not see how you can come after what has passed."

"But I must see Miss Courtenay," he insisted. "I know this intrusion may seem cruel, but I have good reason for it—indeed I have. And you must prevail with your daughter, Mrs. Courtenay—you really must!"

His tone and his looks were very urgent. Mrs. Courtenay could not resist him.

"I—I shall try," she stammered; and rising, she went to Dora's room.

She found her daughter looking at the door with a troubled, breathless look, as if her fate lay behind those old oaken panels.

"I will not see him," she whispered, and she shook from head to foot as she said it; "I will not hear explanation or apologies. Tell him he has not wronged me, and that I have nothing to forgive; but I will not see him—never—never!"

"Dora, he looks quite ill. He has been ill, I am sure; he only wants to see you five minutes—only five minutes. Since he has not wronged you, how can you refuse it?"

"I will not see him," said Dora, as if she were repeating a lesson learned by rote; "never—never!"

Mrs. Courtenay begged in vain. Dora clasped her hands and piteously said, "I cannot!—I cannot!"

With that answer her mother came back.

Mr. Templemore's cheeks flushed as he heard Mrs. Courtenay deliver her daughter's message.

"I would willingly force myself on no one, least of all on a lady," he said, after a while, "but this is no common case—and I cannot write. I must see Miss Courtenay once, and once she must hear me. I have nothing to explain, and no forgiveness to ask; but I have that to say to which she ought not in justice

to refuse to listen. I trust I shall find her more lenient another time."

"But excuse me, Mr. Templemore," said Mrs. Courtenay, a little crossly, "ought you come here at all?"

Mr. Templemore looked at the two women very earnestly. "Will you keep my secret?" he asked, in a subdued tone.

They both replied, after a pause, that they would.

"Well, then, I mean to ask Miss Courtenay to become my wife; but I wish to ask herself—not through another, nor even by writing."

Mrs. Courtenay burst into tears, and uttered a fervent "God bless you!"

Mrs. Luan's whole face kindled, but she did not speak.

"Will you prevail on Miss Courtenay to grant me an interview, Mrs. Courtenay?"

"I shall try, Mr. Templemore—I shall try."

"Then I rely upon you; and since my presence is only keeping Miss Courtenay a prisoner in her room, I shall bid you both a good-evening."

He left them; but scarcely had he gone down three steps of the narrow wooden staircase, when the door above opened, and Mrs. Luan appeared at the head of the banisters. As if unaware that he had seen her, and was waiting to know what she had to say, she touched him lightly on the shoulder, and said, in a whisper:

"She goes to Notre Dame at eight o'clock every morning."

Without giving him time to reply, this unexpected ally reëntered the apartment. She found Mrs. Courtenay urging the point on Dora, and, to all seeming, with little chance of success.

"But what harm can it do you to see him?" asked Mrs. Courtenay; adding, with suspicious eagerness, "he can have little or nothing to say."

"I cannot see him—oh! I cannot, indeed I cannot!" said Dora, who was still trembling from head to foot. "It would serve no good, and it would break my heart—I cannot see him!"

She spoke in such tones of sorrow that Mrs. Courtenay was silenced.

"He must write," she said, looking at Mrs. Luan—"he must write."

"Yes, yes, let him write," almost eagerly said Dora; "tell him that, if you like. I can bear a letter, but not the other thing."

Unconscious of Mrs. Luan's treachery, Dora stole out as usual the next morning. Every morning she now entered Notre Dame at eight, and stayed there in a side-chapel, sometimes for an hour, sometimes for more. She felt as if but for this she must have died. The relief of that hour's silence, solitude, and prayer, saved her from despair. She did not always pray. There were times when the storm within could not be allayed—when she left that solemn old church as desolate as she had entered it, a scorned, unloved, and disgraced woman. But other times there were when a divine balm sank on her soul and soothed her fever to rest.

As the waves of time had beaten in vain against the foundations of that aged pile, so it seemed to her that the brief troubles of life should be endured by the immortal spirit. What were her sufferings to eternity? Sometimes she looked at the representations of saints and martyrs on the painted glass above her, and fell into a languid reverie. Old sorrows, old trials, old triumphs were there, and painted of the dead by men who in their turn had become dead. Was it so hard to suffer and be heroic, to go through this brief life in a lofty, passionate, enduring spirit? And now there stole a dream over her—a dream dangerous in her present mood, a temptation that wore the face of an angel. Why should she not leave that world which she found so harsh, and enter some calm retreat of happiness and

prayer! Were there not asylums provided for the wounded and the conquered, homes in which they could live and die, far from every unkind gaze? Ah! if her mother were but provided for, how she would seek the stronghold where Louise de la Misericorde forgot the sins and follies of Louise de la Vallière; how she would do like that other Louise, the daughter of the profligate French king, and put eternal barriers between her and a cruel world!

But it was not to be. As, after sitting for an hour in the chapel, Dora left it by one of the side-doors, and entered a little court, she started to see Mr. Templemore looking at her with a fixed and very sorrowful gaze. The blood flew to her heart, her head swam, and she remained motionless as he approached her. At first she thought that chance, not design, had led to the meeting; but when he said, gravely—

"Miss Courtenay, why will you not see me?"

She colored, and answered, with quick and keen reproach: "Mr. Templemore, this is not right—it is not generous!"

He looked pained, and almost angry. He walked away two steps, then he came back.

"Let me call upon you this evening," he said, "and speak five minutes to you, and I shall never trouble you again—never!"

She wanted to deny him, but the words faltered on her lips. She looked at him, and felt like one in a dream—all her firmness, all her will, seemed to leave her as their eyes met. She meant to say "No," and it was "Very well—as you please," that she uttered.

He did not wait for her to retract, but at once turned away.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE three ladies sat in their quiet room; Mrs. Courtenay with her hands folded, Mrs.

Luan with her patchwork on her lap, and Dora by the open window, doing nothing, and looking at the old church front, which rose dark and heavy in the gray light of evening. The hour was very calm; the city was quiet; a faint breeze from the river stirred the yellow wall-flowers midst the buttresses, and Dora's quick ear, quickened by the fever of expectation at her heart, caught the sound of a well-known step coming up the silent street. She shrank back, for she knew it—how often had she sat thus by the open window, seeming to look at the evening sky, but in reality listening for his coming! She knew it, and raising her bent and flushed face, she said, as she turned toward her mother and her aunt:

"I saw Mr. Templemore this morning in Notre Dame. He is coming this evening. I believe he wants to speak to me."

"I hear his voice below," eagerly said Mrs. Luan.

She rose as she spoke. Mrs. Courtenay looked bewildered.

"Surely—" she began. Her sister-in-law would not let her proceed.

"Come along, she said," imperatively; "Mr. Templemore wants to speak to Dora alone."

Dora attempted to remonstrate, and Mrs. Courtenay to resist; but Mrs. Luan heeded neither. The battle was nearly won, and a conqueror's fierceness was upon her. She took her sister-in-law's hand, and half raised, half pushed her out of her chair.

"I tell you he must see Dora alone," she angrily whispered, as Mrs. Courtenay rather indignantly asked to know what she meant by such conduct.

"Aunt!" said Dora, but her mother had suddenly joined the enemy, and Dora was alone in the room by the time Mr. Templemore opened the door and entered it.

She had risen on hearing his step coming up the staircase, and she now stood before him silent and grave. The pale evening light from

the open window fell on her face. He drew near her without speaking, then stood still. They both exchanged a long, silent look of sorrowful scrutiny. Well they might. The same storm had passed over them both, and left its cruel traces upon either. How worn, how heart-struck looked these two! He took her passive hand, he looked in her face with the deepest sorrow.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "I did not see you rightly this morning. Is it possible that I am the cause of this?"

A proud, sad smile passed across Dora's face.

"You were the pretence—not the cause!" she said.

She threw her head back, a little as if she defied her hard fate, and much as if she repelled all pity, all sorrow it might draw forth from him. But a true and generous heart is not easily discouraged. Mr. Templemore looked at her very earnestly.

"You do not want me to bear my share of this calamity," he said, "and yet I came here this morning to know if you will not let me repair the cruel wrong I have unconsciously inflicted upon you."

She looked at him in doubt. He raised her hand, which he still held, and pressed it to his lips. The blood rushed to her heart, her brain swam; she knew his meaning, and with the knowledge came a wild fear of yielding to this temptation. She snatched her hand from him; she gave him a look of sudden dread, and turned ashy pale.

"No, no!" she cried—"never! never! You have no wrong to repair, Mr. Templemore. Oh! God forbid this should ever be!"

"Why so?" he asked, very calmly.

Dora could not answer him at once.

"Will you not sit down, and allow me, at least, to speak of this more fully?" he continued, quietly.

"No, no," she replied, excitedly, "this must never be—never! never!"

"But Miss Courtenay, why will you not hear me?—I ask for no more."

He spoke very gently, but with something like reproach. Dora felt ashamed of her vehemence; she sat down in silence, and Mr. Templemore sat down by her side and resumed:

"I believe you have understood me, but there shall be no doubt—no possible mistake. I wish, and allow me to add I hope, that you will be good enough to become my wife."

A crimson flush, which died away in sudden paleness, passed across Dora's face. She clasped her hands, and wrung them in a sort of anguish, for again the fear of yielding to this temptation came over her.

"But that cannot be," she replied. "I cannot marry you—never! never!"

"Why so?" he asked, and he almost smiled.

"Because you want to marry me from honor, Mr. Templemore—because my reputation is damaged, or lost—and because the world says, or will say, that it is so lost through you. But I am too proud a woman to take you—to take any man so."

She wanted to rise and end the matter, but he entreated her to hear him out.

"Only hear me out," he urged; and she sat down again, silently repining at her own weakness. "Dear Miss Courtenay," he said, in his most persuasive accents, "do not put it all upon my honor, and do not let your pride divide us. Why should not ours be a good, an honorable, and, allow me to add, a happy marriage?"

"Happy!" she interrupted—"how many days is it since you loved, and were to marry, Mrs. Logan?"

"Not many," he replied, slowly—"no, indeed, not many; but what of that? I loved her—I had faith in her—what was her love

for, her faith in me? She tarnished my honor—she did her best to ruin you. Can I ever forget or forgive either sin?"

There was severity in his look and in his voice, but there was emotion too.

"He loves her," thought Dora, with involuntary jealousy; "he asks me to marry him in that calm tone, and he denies loving her in that accent of regret. I should be mad to take him so."—"Mr. Templemore," she said, trying to speak very calmly, "this must not be. We must not rush on such a fate with our eyes open. For oh! how we should rue it!—how we should rue it!"

She clasped her hands; she spoke with a subdued passion in her voice—with a strange, sad light in her eyes, which he saw, but could not understand. What ailed her?—what was it?

"Am I abhorrent to you?" he asked, after a while. "If, when we first met, before you knew of my engagement with Mrs. Logan, I had asked you to marry me, would you have rejected me thus, without even taking time to think over it?"

"Perhaps not," hastily replied Dora, blushing at the equivocation; "but Mr. Templemore, I cannot marry a man who loves another woman!—I cannot!—I will not! You cannot say that, if it were not to right me in the opinion of the world, you would ask me to become your wife—you cannot say it!"

"I begin by denying the love you persist in taking for granted, Miss Courtenay," he replied, very gravely. "A tree takes years to grow, but let a storm uproot it, or man's hand lay it low, and it dies and withers in a few days. What though some green leaves linger on the boughs—it is none the less doomed to perish. Thus has fared my affection for Mrs. Logan. The shock has been violent and cruel, like the lopping of a limb; and I will not deny that I felt it keenly—nay, more, I will confess it, the wound is not

healed yet, and but for the sad trouble her cruel folly has caused, I should scarcely care to think of marriage now. But, Miss Courtenay, you will believe me when I tell you that I have always admired you, and that if I had been a free man, I should most probably have come to you long ago on the errand which brings me here this evening."

Dora could not help looking at him in so much perplexity, and doubt, and amazement, that he smiled.

"Do you wrong my taste and my judgment so much as to suppose I could not see and prize your many gifts?" he asked remonstratively; "believe me, dear Miss Courtenay, neither Doctor Richard nor Mr. Templemore was so blind or so indifferent as you imagine. How could he see you almost daily so long and not admire you?"

He spoke with a warmth, with a respectful tenderness, which stirred the depths of Dora's heart. With a sort of terror she felt her resolve giving way, and her denial was uttered with something like despair: "No—it cannot be!"

Mr. Templemore looked both troubled and perplexed.

"Then you condemn me to solitude," he said, "for how can I marry another woman and be happy with her whilst you suffer through me? Pride, Honor, Conscience, forbid it alike!"

"I do not suffer," replied Dora, lifting up her head with a proud, denying motion.

"And you persist in your refusal?"

"I do."

He rose, but not to leave her. He only walked up and down the room, and came back to her side after taking a few turns.

"Dear Miss Courtenay," he said, soothingly, and taking her hand as he spoke, "do not struggle against Fate—this thing must be. You must be my wife, and I must be your husband. You are the only woman I can marry

in honor, and I am the only man whom society will let you marry. Providence has ordained that our friendship shall become the closest and the dearest tie; let us not strive against its decrees, but obey and bless them. Where there has been a true friendship, is it so hard to love? When society and intercourse have been so pleasant, is it so hard to endure them daily? Why should we not be happy, very happy together? Ah! surely far happier than apart! Do not bid me give you up—I cannot do it! The desire I feel for this is like the presentiment of a great good suddenly placed within my reach. Is not Eva's strange and sudden love for you a token of our destiny? That you will be as dear to me as a wife can be to her husband's heart, I know as well as that I am sitting by your side, with your dear hand in mine; and do not think me presumptuous if I feel confident of winning your affections with time. Is it in your nature, true woman as you are, not to end by loving the man whose name and existence you share? I promise you to be patient at first, and not exacting. I shall not expect you to forget in a day the bitter hours which have preceded this brief and sad wooing. For the present I shall ask little or nothing, because I feel so confident, so sure of the future."

Dora heard him, and felt in a dream.

"Ah! but if that future should never come," she argued, rousing herself; "if we should be bound to each other for life, and feel that bond grow heavier daily! Can you imagine how frightful that would be, Mr. Templemore?"

"No," he replied, with manly frankness, "for I cannot imagine myself remaining cold or indifferent toward a young, attractive, and amiable wife! I do not think I should feel so toward a plain one, provided she were good; how then could I be, as you say, to one who is good, pretty, and, to crown all, delightful company? Dear Miss Courtenay, it would be most unnatural; and allow me to add that, as

with fine natures love wins love, I feel sure of securing your affection with time. Then do not wonder if I urge this matter upon you. Love, peace, and happiness are all, as it were, within my grasp—do not deny me!”

He spoke almost as if he loved her already—so tender, so persuasive was his tone. Could this great, this unattainable happiness have come within her reach? She felt dizzy; she did not know whether it was with fear or with joy; and scarcely knowing what she said, she replied:

“Yes, later—perhaps as you say—but later.”

“Dear Miss Courtenay,” he urged, “it must be now. We must get married at once—we cannot delay.”

“Now!” she repeated, suddenly sobered—“now, Mr. Templemore?”

“Now, indeed!” he too repeated.

“Now!” she said again; “now, when honor, generosity, all urge you to it! And if you regret it later, Mr. Templemore—if you repent, what fate shall be ours?”

“But I cannot repent,” he replied, a little indignantly. “You wrong me, Miss Courtenay, by indulging such a thought.”

She was silent. He resumed, in a more gentle tone:

“Believe me, I know what I am doing. I am taking a good and attractive woman to be my companion for life; why, what sort of a man should I be to repent an act which ought to give me the greatest happiness? Surely,” he added, with an admiring smile, “you have learned before to-day that you have the power to win and to charm?”

Poor Dora! she could not resist the language of this tender flattery. A deep warm blush stole over her face, and for a moment made her strangely beautiful. Mr. Templemore saw that he had prevailed, but he wanted her to say so.

“Tell me that you consent?” he asked.

The words sent Dora back to that morning

in Notre Dame, and her dream there, and all that had passed since then. She rose—it was as if a storm had seized and now shook her frail being.

“It is not too late yet,” she said in a low distinct tone; “you are free still, Mr. Templemore.”

“I do not want to be free,” he answered smiling, as he took her hand again.

She left it clasped in his. She stood within two paces of him, calm, pale, and with a light in her eyes that sent a thrill through him.

“Mr. Templemore,” said she in the same low voice, “before you pledge yourself irrevocably, hear me and heed me. I am not so good or so perfect as you think. I am proud—a very proud woman. I am easily offended, but do not easily forget or forgive a wrong. If I become your wife, I shall do so knowing that you do not marry me for love. That knowledge may make me unreasonable and exacting. I have never anticipated such an ordeal, and dare not answer for my wisdom or my patience. Oh! Mr. Templemore, sound your own heart and pause. If you are not sure that you will never repent—if you are not sure that I shall never read regret or weariness in your eyes, leave me for your own sake—for I should turn dangerous—for mine, for I should go mad! Leave me now, I say! My charm may wear off with novelty; your liking may grow cool, and my short happiness go with it. Better by far unmerited disgrace than such a lot—better present heart-ache than to be happy a few hours, and rue them forever—forever!”

What strange thoughts will come when no one bids them! Mr. Templemore heard Dora out, and as he looked at her pale face, lit up with a passionate emotion, and held her hand, he thought, “I did not know this was in her! To think of that pleasant, good-tempered looking girl being finer than any tragic queen! Rachel herself never looked more like a being

all spirit and flame than this Dora Courtenay ; she never uttered a 'forever !—forever !' so mournful and so boding. Yes, I can believe it—there is danger in her."

But we all love danger, and Mr. Templemore liked Dora none the worse for recognizing in her that element of peril. Besides, he had no doubt—no fear.

"I dread nothing," he replied, with a secure smile—"nothing of that kind, at least. I shall never feel regret or weariness, never—never."

How could she doubt him ? He did not doubt himself. He did not know that he was yielding to a keen temptation. He was not in love, but there are many feelings besides love which rule a man's heart, and Mr. Templemore would have risked his own happiness and Dora's ten times over, rather than give her up just then. Her very warning was sweet as an allurement, her forebodings had the charm of a fond defiance. There is no knowing how he might have felt if he had suspected that this proud girl loved him ; but she had guarded her secret well, and he knew it not. He only knew that she was young and attractive, and hard to win, and, manlike, he liked her all the better for it ; and thus their fate was decided.

It was a mere formality, when Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan at length came forth, to ask the former lady for her daughter's hand, but Mr. Templemore went through it. Mrs. Courtenay burst into tears, and Mrs. Luan looked as stolid as if Mr. Templemore's words had fallen on her ear and not reached her understanding. It was all settled, however, and settled very quickly ; the very marriage-day was fixed when Mr. Templemore left them that night.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MR. TEMPLEMORE went home on foot. He went home along a gray moonlit road, with

here and there a patch of trees, throwing their black mass of shadow across his path, or a slope of ground rising against a starry sky. He felt like one in a dream, and the balmy evening air added to the languor which pervaded his being. He could not forget Dora Courtenay. It was not love, it was not admiration ; it was something which partook of the nature of both feelings, and yet which was neither, that brought her face thus ever before him. He saw it on that lonely road with its look of tragic sorrow and sad warning that stirred his very heart ; as plainly as in the room by the open window, when he held her hand in his, as distinctly did he see her now.

And it was not love that summoned her to his side. Alas ! no, it was something very different from that pure and tender feeling. It was the dawn of passion, none the less dangerous that it would be felt for a wife, and might conceal itself under the cloak of duty. His love for Mrs. Logan had been misplaced, but it had been a true, calm, and tender affection, the affection which a wise woman wishes to inspire. Very different from this was the new feeling it was Dora's fate to waken in Mr. Templemore's heart. She deserved, indeed, the love Mrs. Logan had had and lost ; but perhaps Mr. Templemore could not like two women successively after the same fashion ; perhaps, too, that Dora's stronger nature wakened in him the restless and stormy element, and appealed to that faculty of imagination which a pretty childish creature like Florence had left dormant. He questioned himself as he walked home along the lonely road, and he wondered at the calmness with which he could think of his late love, and at the strange yearning which came over him when he contemplated his approaching marriage. He wondered and questioned, and the answer had not come when he reached Les Roches.

It was early yet, and little Eva rushed out

to meet him. He took her in his arms and kissed her, and the purest emotion connected with his new feelings came to him as he thought:

"Yes, she will be a good and tender mother to my child."

They went in together, and as soon as they entered the school-room Eva got upon her father's knee, and laid her head on his shoulder.

"Aunt says Cousin Dora will never come back," she began, in her most doleful voice.

Mr. Templemore smiled. He already saw a bright young mistress at Les Roches, and he could imagine Miss Moore's amazement and consternation.

"But Cousin Dora will come back," he said, in answer to Eva. "I saw her this evening, and she promised to return."

"To-morrow?" cried Eva, clapping her hands in great glee.

"No, not to-morrow."

Eva looked blank. The good deferred is not a good for childhood. Besides, Mr. Templemore, when questioned more closely, could not even say that Cousin Dora would come after to-morrow. It was plain he knew nothing about it. Moreover, he was unusually silent this evening. Eva saw it, and pouted. Then she grew petulant and exacting, and begged for a fairy-tale. Mr. Templemore smiled, and rousing himself from his reverie, he said:

"A fairy-tale! Why, Eva, the world is full of fairy-tales. I saw one the other day—for you know that in fairy-tales there is no such thing as time—with the fairy and the princess—"

"And the prince?" suggested Eva.

"Well, yes, a sort of prince there was, too."

"And what was the fairy like?"

"Little, wrinkled, old, and very cross! She had just broken her eggs and spilt her milk,

and even fairies will be put out by such disasters; so the princess came to her assistance, and gave her more milk and eggs."

"No," contradicted Eva, "it is the fairy who gives the milk and eggs, not the princess, you know!"

"Are you sure?" asked Mr. Templemore.

"Quite sure," triumphantly replied Eva, "it is the fairy who gives the milk and eggs, and they turn into gold and diamonds, you know!"

"Well, they may yet turn into gold and diamonds," answered Mr. Templemore, smiling.

"So far you are right, Eva."

"And what is she like—the princess, I mean?" asked Eva, curiously.

"A sunbeam, if you like it—or your Cousin Dora!"

"Is she as beautiful as Cousin Dora?"

"Oh! quite!"

"And the prince?"

"Ah! the prince, to be sure. Well, there is not much to be said about him, save that he comes for the princess, and that they both go away in a fiery car—very like a rail-way-carriage—and are ever so happy somewhere or other!"

"And is that all the fairy-tale?" asked Eva, looking disappointed.

"My dear, you spoiled it. I would have shown you how distressed the poor old fairy was, and how the beautiful princess came to the rescue, and how grateful the fairy felt, and how she showed her gratitude by heaping all sorts of troubles on the poor princess, till, having tried her to the utmost, she called in the prince, who was only hiding all the time, and, bidding him deliver the princess, and make her happy, she vanished in a cloud of smoke."

"And did he deliver her?" asked Eva, interested.

"I believe so—I hope so! I hope, too, he made a princess so good and so amiable as

happy as she deserved to be; but I am not sure of it, you see—not having yet read that part of the story.”

Eva looked very grave and thoughtful; she seemed to be meditating over the mysterious ending, but in reality she was sleepy. Ere long her eyelids fluttered, then closed, her head sank heavily on her father's shoulder, and a gentle little snore announced her departure for a fairy-land much visited by young ladies of her years. Mr. Templemore rang for Fanny, and as the girl took the child away, he thought: “Yes, she will be a good mother to my child.”

Alas! if he had questioned his heart very closely, Mr. Templemore would have known that he did not care much for Dora's goodness just then. She was already to him as one of those fair-haired sirens who allured Greek mariners in the blue seas, and whom they followed, not caring whither, so sweet was it to go to perdition in their track. “What ailed me, that I never saw it before to-night?” he thought. “The very child saw it, and I did not. She *is* beautiful—of that subtle beauty which escapes analysis, and charms most. Yet I may do myself justice. I did not think of that when I went to ask her to become my wife.”

Yes, however unwise might be this passage in the drama of Richard Templemore's life, there was, at least, this saving clause to it, and which in his darkest hours he remembered with just and manly pride. Duty, honor, not faithlessness of heart, or the folly of a strong desire, had first taken him to Dora Courtenay. He was alone now in that room where he had spent some happy hours with her and Eva. Every object he saw reminded him of long hours, which had seemed brief, they were so delightful. How he remembered those pleasant evenings during which Eva dressed and undressed Minna, whilst he sat talking, arguing, and discoursing with Eva's

governess! What a bright, clear mind she had, and what a listener she made! Plans which he never could have formed had the childish Florence been his wife, now thronged to his mind. Mr. Templemore was too much devoted to study to require a companion to help him in his wooing of this austere mistress. But still it would enhance her charms to have such a fellow-student as Dora. Ay, truly it was something to go down the stream of life with this bright fellow-traveller, and feel as they went that they were strangers in nothing. No fatal bar, no cruel division of intellect, or faith, or temper, or belief, need come between these two. Mr. Templemore knew Dora too well not to know this also, and perhaps such knowledge had made duty easy, and free from all sacrifice. He did not ask himself how he would have acted if Dora had not been what she was, and we will not say it for him. What was right because he felt that this girl could truly become flesh of his flesh and heart of his heart, might have been wrong if it had not been in his power to admit her to such a communion in his being. But no such obstacle, existed between them. All his visions showed him a fair young wife, with bright hair, and soft, shy eyes, whom he could chain to his side without tyranny; for whatever his pursuits might be, she could share and like them, and yet not like them merely for his sake, or to please him. Little wonder, then, that he let such visions come, and gave them welcome, on that lonely evening, after leaving Dora, knowing that he should see her on the morrow, and that before the week was out she would have become his wife.

Dora, too, had her dreams, but oh! how different they were from Mr. Templemore's! She soon escaped from her mother's hysterical joy at such unexpected good fortune to her own room, and there she sat and tried to think. Ah! how happy she would have been if she could have looked at the future with his

eyes! But do what she would, a dark and heavy cloud ever came and veiled from her the glorious radiance of her lot. To be Mr. Templemore's wife, honored, blessed, redeemed from disgrace—pang so keen to a proud heart—to be his cherished and chosen companion, his friend, the mother of his child, the partaker of his cares, his sorrows, and his joys—ay, truly that was deep happiness, and happiness both deep and pure. But, oh! to be his wife, and to see him suffer and repent, to feel herself a burden and a clog upon him, to be not disliked, but endured, and to see it, and have to bear it—that was the cloud, and it appalled Dora's heart like the last great final darkness.

"Oh! better anything than that!—better anything!" she moaned. "I shall tell him to-morrow that I cannot—no, I cannot!" But when tears came and relieved her—when she remembered how earnest, how tender had been his assurances of affection, faith returned, and with faith the fond human yearning for this possible happiness. For she, too, knew there was a strange affinity between them. They had the same tastes, the same likings, the same hopes and desires. They only differed where it was pleasant to do so, and for this no doubt the society of the one had always been so agreeable to the other. Dora, too, could imagine such a life as fancy had shown to Mr. Templemore. "We shall read and study together," she thought, "and I will be his amanuensis, and help him, and he will teach me. Ah! if he can only forget Mrs. Logan, we shall be happy—happy to the heart's core." But that fatal "if" brought the cloud again; the bright life of love and intellectual delights vanished in dismal obscurity, and a faintness, like that of death, came over Dora's whole being. She did not hear her room-door open, but she saw the sudden flash of a light, for she was sitting in darkness, and turning round with a startled

exclamation, she beheld her aunt. Mrs. Luan put down the light she held, and closing the door, came up to Dora. There was a strange, exulting glitter in her eyes, and a triumphant smile on her lips as she said, "Well, Dora, I told you so—you will be Mrs. Templemore."

"Yes, aunt, you told me so," replied Dora; but she sighed drearily.

"You will be a rich woman," said Mrs. Luan. "Mr. Templemore is a rich man."

Dora did not reply; she was not indifferent to wealth, but Mr. Templemore's moved her not.

"He will be a generous husband," resumed Mrs. Luan. "He will give you plenty of things."

Dora began to feel surprised, not at the sordid tone of her aunt's remarks, but at the fluency with which they were uttered. Mrs. Luan spoke with a sharp distinctness so unusual in her, that Dora, after a moment's reflection, ascribed it to the excitement of joy which her countenance expressed very plainly.

"And you will not forget to say a good word for John Luan," resumed Mrs. Luan; "he is your cousin, and deserving—and what is there Mr. Templemore cannot do for him if he chooses? Besides, he will do anything to please you."

"Are you so sure of that, aunt?" asked Dora with involuntary bitterness. "He does not marry me for love, you know!"

Mrs. Luan shook her head, and muttered something which Dora did not understand.

"No, he does not marry you for love," she resumed, looking very hard at Dora; "but I saw him looking at you this evening. If he had not found out before you were worth that little babyish thing ten times over, he found it out to-night."

Dora looked incredulous, and somewhat impatient.

"I tell you he did!" almost impetuously said her aunt—"I tell you that man will dote

on you, if you know how to manage. I told you he would marry you, and he is going to do so. I tell you he will dote on you—and you will see it."

Her vehemence almost frightened Dora.

"Aunt, aunt!" she said, soothingly. But Mrs. Luan stamped her foot angrily.

"You will spoil all if you mope," she said: "he liked you for your bright face—and you must be bright as the sun. He liked you because you laughed and sang, and read and played, and drew—then do it all again. What need you fret? You wanted him, and you have him. If you cry, you will remind him of Florence Gale. Do not give him time to think; make him so happy that he will—that he must forget."

"Make him forget her!" cried Dora, with involuntary passion and jealousy. "Oh! that I could!—that I could!"

Mrs. Luan looked at her with something like contempt.

"You can if you will," she said at length.

"Oh! aunt, how?—how?"

And Dora looked at her aunt as she had never looked before.

"I have never been handsome," replied Mrs. Luan, "and I am not clever or bright like you—at least, people say so; but when I had a husband I never let him think of another woman."

"How did you manage, aunt?" asked Dora, rather astonished.

Mrs. Luan nodded knowingly.

"You will find it out—you will find it out!" she repeated.

"No—never," replied Dora with some emotion. "He may like me if he pleases; and if he does not he may leave me."

"Idiot!" angrily said Mrs. Luan—"idiot! Why do you marry him, then? I tell you it is your right and your duty to fascinate your husband, and make him forget that woman."

Mrs. Luan spoke the truth, and Dora's con-

science told her so. Yes, it was her right and her duty to win and keep her husband's heart.

"I believe you are right, aunt," she replied after a while; "and I shall do my best—but I may fail."

"Why should you fail?" asked Mrs. Luan; but her tone was sobering, and her look, her voice, her manner were all getting confused again. "Why should you fail? Of course a pretty girl like you can easily get hold of her husband; for I have always noticed," she added in the tone of a person who enounces a doubtful proposition, "that men like pretty women, and that Mrs. Logan is not so very pretty. Now, you are fair, and being dark, he must like you—indeed, I suppose he liked you all along, only he did not find it out; but I am sure he did this evening—any one could see he was quite smitten, though you were so pale. So when you are married you have only to get your color back and to manage, and he will dote upon you; and I have no doubt he will do anything you like for John Luan."

She spoke with her old incoherence, and yet her words fell like balm on Dora's heart. The good-night she uttered when her aunt left her had a tenderness in it which said much. Illusion or not, she felt she must believe Mrs. Luan, or perish in her despair. Yes, she must believe that she was already dear to Mr. Templemore, and that she would grow far dearer still, or she could never face the future.

"Aunt is right," she thought; "it is my duty and my right to charm my husband. I must not fret, I must not be pale and look heart-sick—I must be young, handsome, and happy, and," she added, glancing at the mirror, before which she now stood undoing her long, bright hair, "I will!"

Easy resolve to accomplish when the brow is fair, and the eyes are bright; when the cheek is young and blushing, and, above all,

when there is a girl's strong though modest love in the heart.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A DREAM, in which Mrs. Courtenay saw Dora presented with a pair of diamond earrings by her fond husband, was rather abruptly disturbed by Dora herself the next morning. Mrs. Courtenay sat up and stared at her daughter, who stood by her side dressed, and with her bonnet on.

"Why, Dora, what time is it?" she asked, "that you are already going out?"

"I am not going out—I have been out, and I have just come in," said Dora, who looked rather sad and pale. "Mamma, I have a great deal to say to you—will you hear me?"

"Surely," replied Mrs. Courtenay, whose mind was all running on the trousseau—"of course you have a great deal to see to—I could scarcely sleep for thinking of it—but there is an excellent shop in the Rue Imperiale, and—"

"You misunderstand me," Dora interrupted, with an expression of great pain; "what I have to say is this: I cannot become Mr. Templemore's wife."

"But, my dear, you have promised!" cried Mrs. Courtenay.

"True; and the breaking of that promise, which has cost me a sleepless night, will not cost him a sleepless hour," replied Dora, very sadly. "Mamma, Mr. Templemore marries me from honor, and I cannot, I will not be married so. I said 'yes' last night because I was mad; and I dare say I should say 'yes' again if he were to urge the point—therefore I must go. I have been out this morning and made every needful inquiry. If we leave Rouen by twelve, we can be in London to-morrow."

Mrs. Courtenay was confounded. Here was a fall, indeed, from the diamond earrings of

her dream to the departure of reality. When she recovered from her amazement, it was to argue against so sudden a resolve. Especially did she urge Dora not to go without seeing Mr. Templemore. "It will affront him so," she said, pitifully.

Dora hung her head. Yes, it would affront him; but it would not pain him. The sting could go no deeper than pride: even her childish, innocent mother, who saw so little, could see that.

"I cannot see him," she said, looking up; "I cannot say to him all I say to you, mamma. It would look like calling forth protestations which I do not wish to hear. He would have to tell me again that I am young, pretty, and amiable, and that of course he admires me, and must love me in the end. No, I cannot say all that, and hear him over again. Besides, he might not understand me. For, after all, I do not want my husband to adore me—I do not deserve or expect extravagant affection from any man; only no man shall marry me from honor—none!—none!" she added, her eyes flashing and her voice ringing as she spoke.

Mrs. Courtenay argued again; but her daughter, though she listened to her patiently, was not moved by her arguments.

"I cannot do it," she said, despondently. "I do believe that if the feeling I have now should come to me at the altar when we both stood before the priest, and he had his book open, I do believe I should say 'no' even then."

"My dear," innocently said her mother, "I always thought you liked Mr. Templemore?"

Dora's pale cheek flushed; but she gave Mrs. Courtenay no direct answer.

"I cannot do it," she said again; "I would rather marry John Luan than become Mr. Templemore's wife on these terms."

"And do you think of John Luan, then?" doubtfully asked Mrs. Courtenay.

"Think of him! think of any man with this burden of disgrace upon me!" cried Dora, with a sudden agony of grief. "Why, who would have me? No—not John Luan himself, though he has liked me years, and though I need only say, 'I am guiltless,' for him to believe me. He told me so last night: I can marry but one man."

"Well, then, marry him," promptly said her mother.

Dora shook her head. "Time is passing," she said, with a sigh, "and—oh! how I long to be gone—gone, and at peace!"

"But, my dear, Mr. Templemore will probably follow us, and—"

"Follow us?" interrupted Dora; "no, mamma, there is no fear of that; he will be affronted, as you said—besides, he need not know where we are going."

It was hard to give up so bright a vision as that which had not merely given Dora a pair of diamond car-rings, but had seen her throned at Les Roches, and made her mistress of Deenah; it was hard, but it had to be done; and Mrs. Courtenay got up and prepared for the approaching journey.

Mrs. Luan, on learning Dora's determination, stamped her foot, and stammered forth an angry remonstrance of "Idiot! idiot! you shall not, you must not!" but had to grow calm again before Dora's resolve. For she was resolute indeed. Pride, duty, had been with her in the night, and both had forbidden her to become Mr. Templemore's wife. Mrs. Luan stared, then said sulkily, acknowledging herself conquered:

"You may go—I will not—why should I?—John is not in London—I shall stay here."

"I hope you will join us later," replied Dora; "but it is better that you should not come with us now."

"And what will Mr. Templemore say?" asked Mrs. Luan.

"Not much," answered Dora, "for he will

not care much, aunt. I shall write a few lines, which you will give him when he comes, and he will be angry at first—then forget it."

Mrs. Luan muttered something to herself, then was silent. No more, indeed, was said on the subject, and nothing occurred to delay and impede Dora's departure. As twelve struck, the tidal train left the Rouen station, and leaning back in the carriage, where she sat by the side of her amazed and dismayed mother, Dora could say to herself, with a bitter sigh, "It is all over!"

But when is anything over in life? The very step Dora had taken to escape her fate only precipitated its course, and made its accomplishment more certain.

It was barely two when Mrs. Luan, who sat alone moody and defeated, heard Mr. Templemore coming up the staircase. He came to spend an hour with Dora. He came in more sober mood than he had left her the night before, seeing the plain facts of his marriage more as they were than as they had seemed in that moment of seduction and fervor; but he came also as a lover to woo his mistress, if not with fear and doubt of her favor on his mind, at least with sufficient tenderness for her in his heart. Madame Bertrand was not below, and there was nothing to warn him of what had occurred when he entered the sitting-room, and seeing its disorder, Mrs. Luan sitting alone, and a sealed letter lying on the table, he understood all in a moment.

"Where is Miss Courtenay?" he asked, sharply.

"Gone!"

"Gone?"

He took the letter, broke its seal, read it, then crushed it angrily, and looking at Mrs. Luan, he exclaimed impetuously—

"How dare Miss Courtenay use me so?"

Alas! Dora was right—his first feeling was not one of pain, but of wrath and offended pride. How dare she, the poor girl whom he

had honored with his regard, jilt him, Richard Templemore, the master of Deenah?

"What has occurred since last night to justify so extraordinary a proceeding?" he asked, after a pause, and, though still angry, speaking more calmly.

"They tell me nothing," replied Mrs. Luan, sulkily; "I don't know anything. I would not go—why should I? John is not in London."

A light seemed to break on Mr. Templemore's mind. Had Dora repented and recalled her promise, because that John Luan, her cousin, her early friend, was secretly dear to her? He was amazed at himself never to have thought of this.

"Mrs. Luan," he said, looking hard at her, "I believe I can guess Miss Courtenay's reason for acting as she has acted. I forgive her freely; but why was she not open with me? Could you not have told her how willing I was to do everything—and I can do much—that would forward her happiness? Why did she not tell me all last night?" he asked, a little indignantly. "Was it honorable, was it fair, to pledge herself to one man, when, in her heart, she liked another?"

The words roused Mrs. Luan.

"Who?—what?" she asked, with sudden animation. "Who is it Dora likes?"

Mr. Templemore remembered her old opposition to the scheme he had framed for her son and Dora, and he hesitated to reply.

"I know nothing," he said at length, "I can only conjecture. If any one knows the truth of this, surely you do, Mrs. Luan; and surely, seeing how strangely I am treated," he added, with some bitterness, "you might enlighten me, that, once for all, I may know how to act."

Mrs. Luan rose and confronted him.

"You want to know?" she said.

"I do," he replied, turning red with anger as he foresaw her reply, and felt certain that

he had been betrayed and sacrificed for a rival.

"And you will not tell Dora?"

"No," he impatiently answered. "Why should I?"

"Well, then," deliberately said Mrs. Luan, "she likes you."

Mr. Templemore looked on Mrs. Luan, as, after uttering these words, she sat down again, with amazement, on which followed incredulity.

"Nonsense," he said, with something like contempt for the attempted imposition. "I know you do not want your niece and your son to marry; but you need not say that, Mrs. Luan."

"You do not believe me?" she stammered, angrily.

"I cannot—no, I cannot!" he answered, with slight hesitation. "Like me, and run away from me because I want to marry her! Whoever heard the like?"

"You do not believe me?" said Mrs. Luan again. "Then why did you ask? Why did you want to know? Why did you make me tell you?"

She shook with anger. Mr. Templemore looked at her, and felt strangely troubled. What if this sallow, heavy woman had spoken the truth?—what if Dora Courtenay loved him, and had fled because she loved him?

"No," he said, after a brief pause, "it cannot be—I should have seen it."

"Seen it, Mr. Templemore!" rather scornfully echoed Mrs. Luan. "Seen it, when you are blind—blind as a mole!"

Yes, this man had been so blind hitherto, he had fallen so easily into the snares she had laid for him, that she could not help despising him for his blindness, and, in the insolence of her success, taunting him with it. Mr. Templemore turned sharply upon her. For a moment he had a double revelation: that the girl who had pledged herself to him the night

before, and fled that morning, loved him—and that the low-browed woman, who spoke to him with such strange insolence, was his betrayer, he saw by rapid intuition. But either one vision chased the other; either the intoxicating consciousness of his triumph over one proud woman's heart hid from him all trace of his humiliating defeat at the hands of another woman, or that integrity and ingenuousness, which forbid us to suspect without proof, helped his undoing by telling him not to heed an angry woman's words.

"Mrs. Luan, I did not wish to offend you," he said, with a smile; "but your tale is so strange that I may well doubt it. Can you give me any token, any proof of what you say?"

"No," she said, sullenly. "Would Dora put it down in pen and ink, 'I like Doctor Richard?' No, I can give you no proof, but I wish I may never see John again if it be not true!"

The words "Doctor Richard" did more to convince Mr. Templemore than the imprecation which followed it. Doctor Richard! There was strange magic in the name, and in the recollections it called up. Signs which he had not heeded at the time came back, and each was eloquent, and had its own tale to tell. Many a blush, many a sudden paleness, looks both proud and shy, the happy glow which overspread her face when he entered the room, its seriousness when he rose to go, were now remembered, and for the first time understood. Had she, then, liked that poor, careless Doctor Richard, of whom she knew nothing, save that he was poor? Had she liked him without thinking of the owner of Deenah, or the master of Les Roches? Mr. Templemore walked up and down the room with irresolute steps, almost convinced, and yet still doubting.

"May I trouble you for Miss Courtenay's address?" he said, at length. "I must see her, or, at least, write."

He uttered the last word slowly, like one whose mind is not yet made up. When he said that he must write, Mrs. Luan's face fell. Had she remained in Rouen—had she betrayed Dora's secret for this? Write!—was Dora the girl to change her purpose for a letter?

"They tell me nothing," she said, sulkily. "I don't know where they are."

"But, Mrs. Luan," he argued, a little impatiently, "it cannot end thus between Miss Courtenay and me. I must either see her or write to her, and surely you will help me to the knowledge, without which I can do neither."

"They tell me nothing," again said Mrs. Luan, stolidly; "they are in London—that's all."

With a mixture of pity and contempt for her obstinate stupidity, Mr. Templemore sat down by her side, and conceiving that he had offended this foolish and sulky woman, he did his best to coax her back into a good-humor.

"Come, my dear Mrs. Luan," he said, with his most persuasive smile, "you must be my friend in this. How can I direct a letter to Miss Courtenay, London?"

"Kensington," corrected Mrs. Luan.

"But even Kensington will not do. I cannot, at least, trust to the chance of an unexceptionably clever postman in so important a matter as this. There are streets in Kensington—which is it?"

"It is not a street—it's a terrace," sharply corrected Mrs. Luan.

"Come, we are getting on," good-humoredly rejoined Mr. Templemore. "Just tell me what terrace, and I shall not ask for the number."

"Number 5," said Mrs. Luan.

"But what terrace?" asked Mr. Templemore, in his most coaxing tones.

Mrs. Luan turned up her eyes, and seemed to try and remember, then shook her head, in token of denial.

"I have forgotten," she said; "but the postman will be sure to know."

"Sure to know, when I dare say there are a hundred terraces!" said Mr. Templemore, in a vexed tone. "Come, Mrs. Luan, you must really try and remember."

But he might as well have tried to move a stone wall as to move Mrs. Luan. She said the postman would be sure to know that it was Number 5, and a terrace, and beyond this she could not be got. Vexed and wearied, Mr. Templemore left her at the end of a quarter of an hour, muttering, as he went downstairs, "There never was such a fool as that woman!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AND now that Mrs. Luan's cross-examination was over, Mr. Templemore had leisure to think. Never in all his life had he felt so strangely perplexed and troubled as he did then. Should he write to Dora, or should he follow her?—or, in plainer speech, should he marry her or not? Even a man in love has been known to pause before so formidable an alternative as this. When his duty, as he conceived it—when his honor had made him offer his hand to the girl whose devotion to his child had in some sort caused her ruin, Mr. Templemore had not felt the hesitation he felt now. Then every generous impulse of his nature had urged him on, and given strange sweetness to the sacrifice of his liberty. But Dora had released him—she had released him in language so proud and so cold, that, unless it was the veil of a strong and secret love, it was offensive to his pride as a man. He was free—free in honor as well as in fact, since no man is bound to press himself on a woman to importunity. He was free, and Mrs. Luan might have deceived him, or been herself mistaken. It was quite possible that, though she felt no positive aversion against him, Dora recoiled from wedded life

with him just as he now hesitated to venture upon it with her. All this Mr. Templemore felt and knew, for the sweet visions of the preceding evening had rather paled with the morning sun; but something else, too, he could not help feeling. What if that idiotic Mrs. Luan, as he mentally called her, had spoken divine truths, like the ancient sibyls, who gave forth oracles, and strewed them to the winds of heaven, not knowing their worth? What if poor Doctor Richard had been fondly loved by one of the brightest and most accomplished girls he had ever met? What if the very sincerity of her feelings made her shrink from a union in which she could scarcely hope to have her husband's whole heart? Here was a temptation, indeed!—here was a strange, unexpected triumph, made to intoxicate even a wiser man than Mr. Templemore.

There was fever in the thought, and all the seduction of her paleness, of her sad looks, and low voice came back with it. Read by that light, these tokens had a dangerous meaning—dangerous, at least, to Mr. Templemore's freedom. As he walked through the streets of the old city he again seemed to see Dora Courtenay. In vain liberty beckoned on one side, and bade him beware how he lost her; on the other there appeared a fairer vision by far, and infinitely more alluring.

"I am young," she said, "and attractive, a tender, yet proud woman. Your marriage was the folly of a boy; your second choice did not prove the wisdom of your manhood; but what you had not with the one woman, what you could never have had with the other, I can give you. For I am youth and I am love, and I come but once in a man's life when I do come, and he whom I visit, and yet who fails to keep me, was never worthy to have me."

A colder man than Mr. Templemore was, might surely be forgiven if he listened to this temptress. He paused, he hesitated; should he write and trust to that anonymous terrace,

and that number five, for the safety of his letter; or should he seek and find the fugitive, and read, as he could surely read, with this clew to guide him, the truth in her face! He could not resist this desire. He could not resist the secret hope that the truth had been told to him that day. Above all, he could not resist the longing he felt to secure Dora Courtenay, and call her his. She was to him in this feverish hour as many an exquisite relic of ancient art had been for the last year—a wish to be gratified, no matter how extravagant the cost might be.

“I dare say it were better for me that I had never seen her,” he thought, still pausing irresolute on the threshold of his fate; “better for me that I had never gone to her house, and brought her to mine; but now it is too late to think of this. She has lost all for me. Peace, fair name, the world’s esteem, the chance of honorable marriage, everything perished in one hour for my sake; but am I so selfish and so cold that I cannot atone—that I cannot repay her tenfold, and turn her wrong into unexpected happiness?”

There is something splendid in the power of giving; it is a glorious privilege, and makes us kings and sovereigns for the hour, as with the stroke of an enchanter’s wand. Mr. Templemore could not help smiling to himself as he thought how he could change Dora’s desolation into joy. She would never tell him—never—but surely blind though Mrs. Luan thought him, he could see it. He looked at his watch. It was not four yet. If he took the evening train he could be with her to-morrow.

“And why should I not?” he asked himself; “if she really likes me, ought I not marry a woman who has suffered so severely for my sake? And if she does not—ought I not know it, and be free in conscience and honor, as I am in fact?”

Mr. Templemore was no less prompt to act on his resolve, than Dora had been to follow

up hers. He left that night, and was the next day in London.

Dora’s first act, on returning to Madame Bertrand’s rooms, had been to write to a widowed lady in reduced circumstances, and ask whether she would receive her. The reply had come that Mrs. Robinson no longer took in lodgers, but that she would accommodate Mrs. and Miss Courtenay for a time. Thus, on arriving at the station the two ladies had but to take a cab and drive through well-remembered streets, now wearing a strange look, after the absence of a year, to that quiet terrace with a garden wall in front, and nodding trees, where Mrs. Robinson resided. Mrs. Courtenay had been very ill at sea, and she retired to her room almost at once. Dora sat in the front parlor, sad, but calm, because her fate, as she considered it, was now irrevocable. She had placed it, as she thought, beyond the reach of her own will, and she blest Heaven that she had had strength to do so.

The day was now nearly worn, the gray English twilight was setting in, and she was looking at the trees before her, seeing them not—seeing in their stead a gray old church, with lilies growing midst its buttresses, and all in a flame with the red light of a rich sunset, when a tap at the door roused her. A demure parlor-maid looked in, and merely saying, “Please, Miss, Mr. Templemore wishes to speak to you,” she showed him in, as a matter of course, and closed the door behind him.

The cab that had brought him had put him down at the corner of the terrace; he had not knocked at the door, but rung, that she might have no warning; and now he stood before her, as if called up by that vision in which she had been indulging.

She rose and faced him, pale and trembling. It is dreadful to be forever struggling. Strength and courage may well fail us; well may we quail when the battle is perpetual, and never won. With a sort of

despair, Dora felt her heart going away from her, rushing back to its old servitude. She rebelled, she tried to brave this cruel subjection—one of the most humbling a proud woman can feel, and in that first moment, at least, she was powerless. The joy of hearing his voice, of seeing his face again, was stronger than either will or pride.

"Am I again going to be conquered?" thought Dora, with secret anguish. "Am I again going to do the very thing I condemn?—and has he but to appear in order to prevail against me?"

She could not bear the thought. Pity them whose conscience is ever striving against inclinations; pity them, and if they succumb, condemn them not lightly. It is something to have striven; and the defeat which tells of a contest can never be all ignominious. Nevertheless, that habit of self-command which is at the root of a woman's nature, came to Dora's help in this hour of need.

"Mr. Templemore," she asked, calmly, though sadly, "is this well?"

"Miss Courtenay," he replied gravely, "allow me to reciprocate your question: Is this well? Did you use me well?"

"Perhaps not," she said, with some emotion; "but I wished to have it all over. It seemed best."

He looked at her. She had recovered her composure, which his unexpected appearance had somewhat disturbed, and she spoke very quietly. He felt disappointed and perplexed. Had Mrs. Luan deceived him? Surely he would soon know.

"Your letter told me nothing," he said; "I come to know your reasons. You cannot have changed your mind so suddenly without a reason."

"I have no new reason," replied Dora.

"But you have some old reason," he persisted; "some old reason, which you had not told me."

"No—none."

There was a sad passiveness in her tone, that told him nothing save that the subject was painful to her. He still felt perplexed, and more irritated perhaps than perplexed. He asked her to hear him, and Dora raised no opposition. She sat down by the window, and he sat facing her, watching every motion of her features as he spoke. He urged over again every argument for their marriage, and against her refusal, which he had already used—but vainly. Dora leaned back in her chair with her hands clasped on her lap, and her eyes downcast or fixed on vacant space, and with a face as pale and as changeless as marble. She heard him, she did not contradict him much, but she said despondently, "No, Mr. Templemore, it cannot be."

"Then I see what it is!" he exclaimed, reddening as he spoke, and speaking with more warmth than he was conscious of using—"you have a previous attachment, and will not tell me!"

Dora reddened too, but whether with resentment, shame, or any other feeling, it was impossible for Mr. Templemore to tell.

"You are mistaken," she answered; "if I had any such feeling, I should not be ashamed of it, and I would tell you at once."

"Then you dislike me!" he said with some impetuosity.

Dora smiled, but simply answered: "No, why should I?"

Mr. Templemore was confounded. He was stung too. All his fond visions had melted away, and he only saw a calm, proud woman, who did not seem to care much for him; and whom, spite her indifference—alas! perhaps on account of that indifference—he could not help wishing to win. Had he hesitated whether he should marry her or not, had he followed her thus far in hot pursuit, had he pleaded his cause for the last half hour with every subtle and varied argument, to be

balked in the end? Mr. Templemore was not a handsome man, and he knew it; but he knew too that woman is won by the ear far more than by the eye; and if he had never guessed that Dora loved him, he had always seen that she liked him. Again and again he had prevailed with her, made her yield her will to his, and not quarrel with her subjection. And now, when he laid himself out to charm, he failed. When he offered her position, wealth, and what he justly thought most of, himself, he failed. He was offended, he was hurt, but he was allured too, and that unexpected resistance was the last crowning seduction which rendered Dora irresistible, and made him resolve not to leave the room till he had conquered.

"And so," he said, with a mixture of pathos and anger in his voice, which moved Dora's heart—"so that is your unalterable resolve, Miss Courtenay? We might be happy together—we must be wretched apart. Think of it well! You condemn me to solitude. You know I cannot, I will not in honor marry another woman whilst you live. I say it again—you condemn me to solitude!"

He had risen and was pacing the room in some agitation; but he came back to her as he uttered the last words, and standing before her, seemed to appeal, more in sorrow than in wrath, against so harsh a sentence. Dora felt much disturbed, but she tried to say composedly:

"I do not, Mr. Templemore. I trust, I hope you will marry—as to that, so may I!"

"Then you do want to marry!" he exclaimed, jealously; "you do want to marry?"

"Why not, Mr. Templemore?" she asked, lifting up her head proudly, for both tone and question offended her.

"Then why not marry me?" he argued angrily; "you say you have no previous attachment, why not marry me?"

"Because I will never marry a man who

marries me from honor," replied Dora, with some energy. "I have said it, Mr. Templemore, and nothing shall make me gainsay it."

Mr. Templemore looked amazed.

"Honor!" he said, impatiently; "did I speak of honor, Miss Courtenay?"

Dora felt troubled. He had not, indeed, urged that argument.

"You said you could not marry any other woman in honor, Mr. Templemore," she replied at length.

"Nor can I—but did I say that I wished to marry *you* from honor? On my word, Miss Courtenay," he added, with sudden emotion, "it is not honor, it is not the wish to right you that brought me here this evening. I know all you can urge. That a few days ago I was to marry another woman—I grant it; but I also know this, that I am here, and that, as I said before, it is not honor that brings me. It is the wish—the irresistible wish that you should be my wife."

Involuntary tenderness softened his voice and look as he uttered the word "wife;" and no lover's protestation could have moved Dora's heart as that word thus uttered by one so dear. It comprised all—every eloquence, every promise, every fond hope, every pledge, every bond. Without a word of doubt or resistance, with her whole soul in the act, she placed her hand in his.

"And this time," said Mr. Templemore, radiant and triumphant, "I shall keep you to your promise!"

"You need not, Mr. Templemore," she said with the brightest smile he had ever seen on her bright face; "nothing shall make me break it."

"Her aunt spoke the truth," thought Mr. Templemore as he looked at her; "but what a strange, perverse creature to give me all that trouble!"

Perverse or not, he loved her. Perverse or not, he grudged not the trouble she had cost

him—he regretted not the strange turns of fate which had given him this prize. She was to him just then that something exquisite and rare, which in certain moods the best and the wisest man will purchase, no matter at what cost, ay, even though the price should be life-long liberty.

When Mrs. Courtenay, much recruited by a long nap, thought she should like a cup of tea, and came down for that purpose, she found the tea-things on the parlor table, two candles burning brightly, and by their light she saw Mr. Templemore looking perfectly happy, and her daughter as gay as a lark on a summer morning.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Nothing occurred to delay the fate which one woman's folly and another woman's treachery had brought down on these two. Mr. Templemore wished for a speedy marriage, and he had his way. The morning on which Dora was to become his wife was fixed, and in the mean while he came daily to see her. He came early and stayed late, and unless when he was with her, he felt restless and unhappy. He did not know himself what ailed him. He seemed to be bewitched. It was as if he had never seen before that this girl was worth winning. He did remember having admired her, but he could not now believe in his past admiration—it seemed so cold, so dead. Sometimes he had gleams of reason, and wondered at himself; but they were gleams, and no more. They passed athwart his mind troubling it, and when they had departed, he only felt more strongly impelled to rush on this fate before him. He was like the fisherman in the ballad. The very waters that were to devour him allured him irresistibly. Perhaps he could not help it. Perhaps this sudden and vehement passion, following on a long quiet love for another woman, was the only

thing that could save him from the abhorrence of marrying a girl his heart had not chosen; even as but for that passion he could never have conquered Dora's pride and won her consent. The feeling that turned his sacrifice into sweetness had vanquished all her scruples, and changed their bitterness to strange joy.

For, after all, she could not be blind. If Mrs. Logan had been loved, she was loved ten times more. If Florence had been dear, Dora was far dearer. He made no professions—perhaps remembering his involuntary infidelity, he was silenced; but there is another eloquence besides that of language, and a hundred signs betrayed him.

And Mr. Templemore was not more blind than his mistress. He kept his promise to Mrs. Luan. He told Dora nothing; he put no questions, but before two days were over he knew more than Dora's aunt had betrayed.

Mr. Templemore was too imaginative to be a clear-sighted man. He often remained blind to the plainest things, because he could not compel himself to see them under their real aspects; but once his penetration was awakened, it became quick and searching as lightning, and his very imagination coming to his aid, it left no recess unexplored. A sudden paleness which passed across her face as he recalled the past, and inflicted upon her the sting of a retrospective pain—who said that love was merciful? The glow which surrounded it when reminded of the time during which he came to her as plain Doctor Richard, and other signs as subtle, but as plain, convinced him that the poor struggling medical man had been as tenderly loved as the affluent gentleman, and that either had been infinitely dear to Dora's heart.

No man could remain indifferent to such a discovery, least of all a man who had a generous nature, and who was himself very much smitten. Passion softened into tenderness as he remembered all that this now happy-look-

ing girl had endured for his sake, and with a silent fervor he vowed to atone for the sufferings of the past by the love and devotion of the whole future. Alas! how easy it was to Mr. Templemore to keep that vow! How swift, how invading, how all-absorbing was this new love which had conquered the old, and buried it fathoms deep! How is it that even fine and noble natures are subject to this lamentable inconstancy? We see it daily, but who shall venture to read a riddle so perplexing! Of voluntarily forsaking the woman to whom he had been pledged so long, for any other woman, Mr. Templemore was incapable; but honor is not love, and when he found how willing he was to take Florence at her word, and how eager he felt to do Dora justice, he did not dare to question his own heart. Had his affection for the one grown cool since he had known the other? Had that irresistible attraction which had drawn him to Dora day after day, made him bring her to his house, and delight in her society, been the guilty dawn of his present lawful fondness? It might be so; but another explanation as plausible, and more soothing to his conscience and his pride than this, was also possible.

Mr. Templemore's nature was one of strong passions—as, indeed, his countenance expressed plainly; but though he was past thirty, though he had been married to one woman, and pledged to another, Passion had never had her day, nor even her hour. Now amongst the legends of science is one of historical truth. Every eighty or ninety years for the last three centuries a volcanic isle has risen in the Mediterranean, near San Miguel of the Azores. Flames and earthquakes mark its birth. As it rises a burning stream flows down its sterile peaks into the sea. When it has reached its full height it remains motionless for a while, burning like a beacon, which ships can see miles away; then it slowly

sinks back again into the deep waters, and a faint wreath of smoke shows the spot where it has vanished.

Such cycles of passion and fever there are in most human lives. The feeling may take the name of love, of ambition, nay, of devotion itself—it matters not, forth it must come. Midst catastrophe and bitter throes it must rise from beneath those calm waters where it lay so falsely sleeping. This might have been Mr. Templemore's fate. He might have been destined to love a woman passionately at a certain time of his life, and for good or for evil, as the future would show, that woman proved to be, not Florence, but Dora. The suddenness of this new feeling carried with it a sort of intoxication, which was both sweet and dangerous, and against which it was very difficult to guard. Mr. Templemore did not seek to do so; he gave himself up to the love which there was no law, human or divine, to forbid, and which the woman who inspired it shared in all its fulness.

And thus the brief days of the courtship went by, and ended in a marriage morning that made Dora Courtenay Mr. Templemore's wife.

When Dora alighted from the carriage that brought her home, she felt as if she were treading upon air; and Mr. Templemore, as he led her in, looked as happy as a man who resolves to marry a woman from honor, but who has the good fortune to fall desperately in love with her, can well look. That their marriage was hurried, private, and contracted under the ominous cloud of disgrace, with no kind friends gathering around them to wish them joy, neither heeded in that hour. They were happy, and happiness, we fear, is rather a selfish feeling. Still Dora had one keen pang. Her aunt had promised to come and stay with Mrs. Courtenay, but she had not kept her word. Her mother must remain alone, for Mr. Templemore would have his

honeymoon to himself, and only smiled when Mrs. Courtenay grew querulous, and Dora looked imploring. He promised they should not long be divided, but separated it was plain they must be.

To Dora's great joy, therefore, though somewhat to her surprise, Mrs. Luan was found sitting in the bedroom up-stairs when the bride entered it to change her dress.

"Oh! aunt, that is kind!" cried Dora. "But why did you not come earlier—why did you not come to see me married?"

Mrs. Luan looked at her; never did bride look brighter or happier than Dora, as she stood before her aunt, resting her two hands on Mrs. Luan's shoulders and gazing down with the most radiant smile in her face.

"I began to think you did not care about me," saucily continued Dora, putting on a frown.

"Are you married?" asked Mrs. Luan.

Dora laughed gayly.

"Why, aunt, this is not my every-day dress—is it?" she asked. "You never saw me in white with orange flowers before to-day—did you?"

"Well, but are you really married?" insisted Mrs. Luan.

Dora took off her glove and showed the wedding-ring on her left hand.

"Now do you believe it?" she asked good-humoredly; "besides, Mr. Templemore is below, and if you will but come down you will hear him call me Mrs. Templemore. He has already done so twice; and, aunt," she added, in the fulness of her joy, "I do believe he is as happy as I am!"

Everything in her betrayed joy and happiness, not unmingled with triumph. She could not help it. Some brides are pale and tearful, some are dignified, and some are simply cheerful. Dora was glad, and her gladness, which she never thought of concealing from her apathetic aunt's eye, which she scarcely

thought visible to that cold-blooded lady, now shone forth without disguise. With Mr. Templemore, with her mother, even, she would have been more shy, but with Mrs. Luan she was not on her guard, and she looked as she felt, the happiest of women. John Luan's mother stared at her moodily. It was she who had parted Mr. Templemore and Florence Gale; it was she who had given the rich man to her poor niece; it was she who had stimulated his liking into passion, who had urged him on with the lure of Dora's love. She had done it, she felt no regret, and not an atom of repentance, and yet this happiness of Mr. Templemore's wife irritated her.

"How dare Dora be glad, when she must know that her bliss would be John Luan's grief! How dare she!"

She could not speak her resentment, but she was untying her bonnet-strings, and was going to display her wrath according to her usual fashion, when Dora nimbly took the bonnet from her hands and laughingly put it away.

"No, aunt," she said, "I cannot allow it. I made that bonnet myself; and I cannot allow it. Besides, what is there to put you out on a day like this? Look, I have not forgotten you."

She opened a jewel-box, and produced a handsome ring, which she slipped on Mrs. Luan's finger.

"That is our gift," she said, "his as well as mine; I need scarcely tell you so," she added with a smile, for the ring was evidently an expensive one, "and you must look glad, aunt."

A romantic, high-minded woman, if she had felt what Mrs. Luan felt toward Mr. Templemore just then—namely, that he was robbing her son of his mistress, and making his wife of the very girl whom John Luan had chosen years ago for himself—such a woman, we say, would certainly have thrown the ring away,

and probably have made a speech. But Mrs. Luan, though she cared not one farthing for the gift, and hated the donor with all the unreasonable hate of a wrong-doer, who wants to vent on some one the resentment due to her own deeds, was neither romantic nor high-minded. She only looked angry and sulky.

"Aunt, what ails you?" asked Dora.

"What will John say?" inquired Mrs. Luan in her turn.

Dora's color fled at the question.

"I am sorry for John," she faltered—"very sorry, aunt."

"And where are you going to live?" continued Mrs. Luan, changing her theme. "Here?"

Dora smiled.

"Oh! aunt, what a question!" she said gayly; "is Mr. Templemore going to live in an eight-roomed house?"

"Well, but where is it?"—persisted Mrs. Luan—"in what square?"

"In no square at all," replied Dora, still amused. "Do you think, aunt, Mr. Templemore has a house everywhere? He has but one of his own that I know of—the house to which we are going—and that is Deenah!"

Mrs. Luan looked up with sudden interest.

"Then you are going away?" she said.

"Ay, surely, after breakfast; and that is why, aunt, I am so glad and so grateful, too, for your coming. Poor mamma will not be left alone."

"And you will cross over to-day," continued Mrs. Luan—"this very day you will be in Ireland?"

"No, Mr. Templemore wants to show me North Wales. I do not know when we shall reach Deenah."

She looked in some perplexity at her aunt. She could not understand why this journey seemed to interest Mrs. Luan so much, that her face had cleared and brightened the mo-

ment Dora had mentioned it. But it was so. Mrs. Luan looked quite brisk and cheerful now, and said that she would go down; and so she did, leaving Dora rather grave and pensive.

Mr. Templemore was alone in the front parlor waiting for his wife, when the lock turned, and the door opened. He thought it was Dora, and with that impulse which prompts us to go and meet whatever we love, he moved toward the door. When he saw Mrs. Luan's clumsy figure and sallow face, he almost stepped back, so unpleasant was the surprise. A feeling which could not be a presentiment, for it came too late, but which certainly partook of repulsion and dislike, suddenly rose within him.

"I must get that woman's son some appointment or other," he thought; "and she must leave Les Roches. I will not have her near Eva."

He had not time to linger over the feeling. Dora, who had quickly changed her dress, now entered the room, no more a bride, but a wife; and with her came Mrs. Courtenay, who, in doleful and hysterical tones, informed them that breakfast was ready.

The meal was not a cheerful one; it was soon over. Mrs. Luan's presence seemed to Mr. Templemore to have brought a funereal gloom with it. He was eager to be gone, and pleaded that they would be late for the train if they did not depart at once.

Mrs. Courtenay heaved several deep sighs, and could not help remarking:

"I must say, Mr. Templemore, that it is a very barbarous fashion to take away girls so—it is like kidnapping to me. Or a taking away of the Sabines, or anything horrible."

"But Dora is willing," pleaded Mr. Templemore, good-humoredly; "so that makes a great difference, Mrs. Courtenay, between me and the sons of Romulus."

Mrs. Courtenay sighed again, but submitted.

She even went through the trying ordeal of bidding her daughter farewell, with a fortitude for which Mr. Templemore, who was watching Dora's quivering lip with some uneasiness, was grateful to his mother-in-law. And when he pressed her hand and bade her adieu before entering the carriage where Dora was waiting, he said warmly :

"My dear Mrs. Courtenay, you shall soon see your daughter again, and she shall tell you then, that if I take her from you it is to make her a very happy woman."

With these words, he, too, was gone; the carriage drove away, and Mrs. Courtenay burst into half-angry, half-pitiful tears.

"I never knew anything so selfish as men!" she exclaimed, addressing Mrs. Luan. "To think of Mr. Templemore taking my child from me in order to make her happy! Could he not have stayed here—Mrs. Robinson would have given up the house—or taken me with them to North Wales? Why," she continued, warming with the sense of her wrongs, and rocking herself to and fro in her chair—"why must he have Dora all to himself? I say he is no better than Romulus. As to Dora being willing, I dare say those Sabine girls were willing too, or they could not have been taken away. I have always heard, indeed, that thieves are loth to attack women, because they scream so. I wonder Mr. Templemore could be so absurd!"

The consciousness of Mr. Templemore's absurdity, however, had one good result; it so far soothed Mrs. Courtenay's irritated feelings, that her next remark could refer to the propriety of making a cold dinner on the remains of the wedding breakfast. Great was her amazement, therefore, when Mrs. Luan composedly declared that she did not intend dining with her sister-in-law.

"And where, then, do you dine?" asked Mrs. Courtenay, sitting up, and looking confounded.

Mrs. Luan answered that she meant to dine with Mrs. Smith. With this lady Mrs. Courtenay had long entertained a deadly feud, and she, therefore, considered this declaration doubly insulting. Moreover, it was simply ridiculous, as she kindly added, "for how could Mrs. Luan want to dine with Mrs. Smith, when she had not been two hours in London?"

But Mrs. Luan, in her stolid way, replied that she had gone to Mrs. Smith's first; and she completed the list of her iniquities by adding that, as Mrs. Smith had a spare bedroom, she meant to stay with that lady. Mrs. Courtenay seldom got in a passion, but she felt fairly enraged at such usage, and she expressed her resentment with a warmth which might have led to a final breach between the two ladies, if Mrs. Luan had been a sensitive person, which she luckily was not. Unmoved by her sister-in-law's reproaches and tears, she put on her bonnet and left her.

Mrs. Smith used to live at Highgate, but she had probably changed her quarters, for Mrs. Luan took the Tottenham-Court Road omnibus, and having reached Bedford Square, knocked at the door of one of its many lodging-houses, was admitted by an untidy servant, and entering the front parlor, found John Luan there, reading the *Lancet*.

"Why, little mother, where have you been all this time?" he asked, good-humoredly. "I came in early, just to spend an hour with you, and, lo and behold, you, the bird was flown!"

"I went to take a walk," replied Mrs. Luan, sitting down—"why, you are pale, John," she abruptly added.

"Pale!" he echoed, with a hearty laugh, which showed, at least, the soundness of his lungs—"pale, little mother!—why, surely you do not call me pale?" he added, walking up to a low looking-glass above the mantel-piece, and surveying therein his florid, handsome face with that candid admiration which most

handsome young men feel for their own good looks.

Perhaps seeing him so gay and happy smote her—perhaps the knowledge of the wrong she had helped to do him was too much for her; at all events, Mrs. Luan could not bear to think of Dora, Mr. Templemore's happy wife, and to look at her son, whom that day had robbed forever of his dear young mistress. She flung herself on the sofa, and burst into sobs and tears. Now, indeed, John Luan was pale—pale as death.

"You have had a letter?" he said—"news—bad news!" And he bent over her with an eager, questioning gaze, that seemed as if it would have snatched and devoured the very words from her lips.

"No," sulkily replied Mrs. Luan, recovering her self-possession, and sitting up.

"Then, in Heaven's name, what is it?" asked John, still anxious.

"I saw a child run over," she stolidly answered.

John Luan looked profoundly indifferent.

"That," he said, coolly, "is an every-day matter in London. I thought you had better nerves, little mother. I wonder Dora does not write," he added, a little impatiently; "you have been here three days, and I think she might have written."

Mrs. Luan replied that Dora had no time—Eva took all her leisure.

"Well, well," good-humoredly rejoined John, "I trust she will not long be a governess—I am almost sure of that appointment, and—and I'll marry Dora as soon as I get it."

He looked at his mother rather doubtfully. He knew, though a word on that subject had never passed between them, that since the loss of Dora's fortune, she was no longer a daughter-in-law after Mrs. Luan's own heart. But this was a matter in which John was quite resolved on having his own way, and he

thought the present opportunity as good a one as any to announce his determination.

"You can't marry," eagerly said Mrs. Luan; "you are first cousins."

"Come, come, little mother, kings and queens marry their first cousins, and why should not doctors have the same privilege?"

"You can't afford it," urged Mrs. Luan, shaking with emotion; "you can't, John."

"Yes, I can," he wilfully replied; "I tell you, I am almost sure of that appointment. The place is pretty, and the cottage simply delightful. You and Mrs. Courtenay shall have two such nice rooms, little mother. And Dora and I another, not so good as yours, but quite good enough for young people. Then the parlors are so cheerful, and the garden is one mass of flowers; and do you think that being rent free, and having a hundred a year salary, besides such practice as I shall be sure to come into—do you think, I say, that I, a man of twenty-six, cannot support wife, mother, ay, and child too, if need be," he added, with a secure smile, though something in the bright vision he thus called up made his blue eye grow dim as he spoke.

Dream away, John Luan! See that cottage with its low, pleasant rooms, and its blooming garden, and put Dora there, whilst the dream is on you. Never, save in that dream, shall her feet cross that lowly threshold; never shall child of yours rest on her bosom, save in the fancy of this moment. Even now, and whilst you are speaking, her hand is clasped in Mr. Templemore's hand, and her happy face looks up to his. These two are now taking together that journey of love to end in a happy home, for which you have saved twenty pounds. "Yes, we can do it upon that," thinks John Luan; and he does not know that the rich man has robbed him, and that the woman who sits by his side and looks at him with so scared a face, has more than abetted the despoiler. But for her

his prize would have remained untouched, and not be now another man's darling; but for her he would have had his chance and won, perhaps from sad weariness, what that other happier man owes to love.

"So you see," resumed John Luan, following aloud the train of his reverie, and still thinking of the twenty-pound note up-stairs, so safely locked in his desk—"so you see, little mother, that I have plenty of money. Dear Dora, I know, will never grumble at our poverty."

A light seemed to break on Mrs. Luan's mind. She seized it eagerly. She did not repent, she felt no remorse, but it would be a relief if Dora had been faithless and perjured herself.

"Then she promised?" she exclaimed, clinching her hands; "she did promise!"

"Promise to marry me!" repeated John; "what if she did?"

"How dare she!—how dare she!" cried Mrs. Luan, working herself up to a sort of frenzy; "how dare she do it?"

"Come, mother," resolutely said John, "you must not talk so. Dora and I have a right to please ourselves in this. Your only objection is her poverty—well, then, I say I can support a wife."

"But how dare she promise?" continued Mrs. Luan, stamping her foot in her rage; "how dare she?"

John had a mind to say the truth—that Dora had not promised. "But if I tell her that," he thought, "it will be all to begin over again another time, better she should make up her mind to it now."

If Mrs. Luan's anger had not been too great for utterance, she would in her wrath have told John Luan that Dora had that very morning become Mr. Templemore's wife; but by the time that her rage no longer impeded her speech, she remembered that if she spoke she must account for her own treacherous silence—and she was mute.

She looked sullen and conquered. John felt rather uncomfortable, but putting on a cheerful look, he kissed her, said briskly it was time for him to go, and humming a tune to show how unconcerned he felt, he walked out of the house, and thought when he got out into the square, "She took it better than I expected."

The door had no sooner closed on her son, than Mrs. Luan's frenzy broke forth anew.

"She promised—she dared to promise!" she said, rocking herself to and fro on the sofa. And every fond word and look of John Luan's, every happy blush and smile of Dora's that morning, every sign of love she had read on Mr. Templemore's face, came back to her then, and exasperated her. She had wanted to save her son, but Dora had betrayed and Mr. Templemore had plundered him. She thought of his jealousy and grief if he had known that this was their wedding-day, and the thought appalled her, and filled her with wrath for their happiness and his despair. How dare they be blessed at what would wring her son's heart within him? "Let them take care, that's all!" thought Mrs. Luan, as she sullenly calmed down. "They are happy to-day; but let them take care, that's all!" she added, nodding grimly.

She did not question John when he came in to dinner. She did not ask to know how and when Dora's promise had been given. Mrs. Luan wanted to know nothing; she had moved the intolerable burden of guilt from her own shoulders to that of another, and perhaps she dreaded whatever could enlighten her.

John, who was an arrant domestic coward, felt much relieved at his mother's silence, and like most cowards of his sex on such occasions, he took some glory in it.

"There is nothing like pluck," he thought complacently; "women like it, and they need the strong hand, the best of them. Your

health, little mother," he added gayly, lifting up his glass and drinking to her.

Mrs. Luan said nothing, but turned sallow, and looked at him coldly; it was as if, gifted with second sight, she had seen Mr. Templemore that very same moment raising his glass to Dora with the same act, and saying with mingled pride and fondness, "Your health, Mrs. Templemore."

"My little mother has not got over it yet," thought John; and he prudently walked out into the square to smoke a cigar. "But she will," he continued in his mental soliloquy, "because she must. I say it again, the best of them need it—their nature requires subjection. Even my little Dora, good as she is, has a saucy tongue at times, and needs control!"

And then, as he walked slowly in the dusty square, and looked dreamily at the stars that came out in the dull London sky, he again went to the cottage, and there indulged himself in a conjugal quarrel with Dora, which ended happily with a reconciling kiss, and of course with the assertion of John Luan's manliness, and of Mrs. Luan's wifely subjection.

Alas, poor John, your little Dora has already found her master!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THERE is a cruel superstition among sailors. If one of the crew should fall overboard and be drowned at the beginning of the voyage, it is a pity, to be sure, but then it is also a sure token that the weather will be fair, and the journey prosperous. That ship can never be wrecked which has witnessed such a catastrophe.

Even so it seemed to be with Mr. Templemore and his wife. Death had taken her brother, and a stormy wave removed his betrothed from their ken, whilst John Luan went adrift all unconsciously; and now their two

barks could sail side by side on smooth seas, beneath a serene sky, with the gentlest winds to speed them.

Did they think of this as they entered Deenah together? Oh! for the mutability of the human heart! The woman for whom Mr. Templemore had prepared that home was now forgotten, and as he had given every passionate emotion of his heart to that bright-haired girl by his side, so had she surrendered her whole love to the happy rival of her own adored brother. Yes, spite all the wrecks and ruins of the past, spite its sorrows, and a lonely grave, they were blest. Dora felt it as they walked through the grounds, and she saw the sky, the mountains, the woodlands, all in a flame with the burning radiance from the west, whilst the whole house glittered afar like a fairy palace, in the hazy glow of the setting sun. She felt it as they passed beneath aged trees, through the waving grass, and the blackbird and the thrush sang so sweetly above them. She felt it as they entered the house together, and she stood in a large, bright room, with pictures, and flowers, and books, a luxurious room, but also a genial one, made to live in, and which seemed to echo her husband's welcome.

Mr. Templemore watched Dora's eyes as they scanned this room, half shyly, half freely. He saw her look wander from a large view of Venice on the walls, to a glowing sketch of the Eastern desert, and thence again to the exotic flowers blooming in one of the windows, beyond which spread a grand view of heathy mountains.

"Well?" he said, gently drawing her toward him.

"Well," she replied, looking up at him with proud humility, "King Cophetua has married the beggar-maid."

"I hope she had brown hair and fine eyes," he replied, with tender admiration.

Dora shook her bright head, and the eyes

which her husband praised, and which were indeed very fine eyes, took a tender and wistful look as she replied demurely :

"I know nothing about that ; but this I surely know—that beggar-maid was a very happy woman !"

Yes, she was a happy woman, and as wedded bliss rarely wanes during the first week of the honeymoon, it is no great wonder that Dora's little planet of love and happiness was still in the ascendant a fortnight after her marriage. Mr. Templemore was out, though it was early, and Dora was alone. The morning was bright, and she felt as bright and as gay as the morning. With a sweet clear voice she sang aloud to herself as she went through the sunlit rooms of Deenah. She sang an old Irish song, full of sorrow, but her heart was light. Suddenly she was mute. She had heedlessly entered a room where dark blinds shut out the light, where the air felt chill, and her heart failed her as she recognized Mr. Courtenay's collection.

Dora had visited this apartment since her arrival in Deenah, but she had seen it with her husband ; alone she had not ventured within it, and, now that she had crossed its threshold, she knew not how to retreat or advance. Her heart beat, her head swam ; a chair was near her, she sank down upon it, and looked around her. Every country and every civilization, Christian and heathen, had contributed to Mr. Courtenay's collection ; the history of mankind was in all that Dora saw, but she only read in it the story of her brother. Her eye wandered from one end of the room to the other. Specimens of Palissy, Majolica, Etruscan, mediæval, and antique, were there before her, some perched aloft on marble columns, others more precious in black cabinets, with glass fronts and brass locks. Here and there a gold or silver cup shone, or a piece of carved ivory gleamed faintly ; and Dora, looking at these things, saw herself a girl again in her old home near Dublin. She

saw herself sitting up for Paul, and preparing a meal for his return. And she saw him too ! She heard his voice, she sat at his feet and looked up in his face, on which the firelight shone ; but the bitterness of these recollections was too much for her. Dora buried her face in her hands and wept. When, by a strong effort, she at length compelled her tears to cease, and looked up, she saw Mr. Templemore standing before her with a letter in his hand, and eying her thoughtfully.

She reddened as she rose, and went up to him with some embarrassment.

"I could not help it," she said, deprecatingly, "I could not, indeed. I entered this room unexpectedly, and everything I saw was too much for me !"

Her quivering lip showed him that her emotion was not over.

"How much you loved your brother !" he said, gently.

"Much !—oh ! Richard, the word is cold ; he was everything to me."

"Are you sure you have quite forgiven me, Dora ?" he gravely asked.

She looked at him in some wonder.

"Forgiven you, Richard !—if I had Paul's death to forgive you, it would have been easier for me to die than to enter this house as your wife. Forgive that !" she impetuously added—"I fear I could not. I fear I never forgave Mr. Courtenay, who lured my brother, and Florence Gale, who urged him on, till he died of the anxiety, the labor, the suspense, and, last of all, the disappointment these two inflicted upon him. She would have been his wife if he had won the day, but he had scarcely lost it when she married another. Perhaps you did not know this," she continued, seeing the look of surprise that passed across Mr. Templemore's face, "and perhaps I should not have told you ; but it is true. She was faithless to him, and though, if I am your wife, it is her doing, not mine, I cannot help

feeling that I am Paul Courtenay's sister, and that all unconsciously and unwillingly I have avenged him. I have striven against the feeling again and again, and again it has come back, and been too strong for me."

She was very pale, and she shook from head to foot as she uttered this resentful confession; but Mr. Templemore only kissed her soothingly, and smiled as he led her out of the room, and locked the door behind him. He could read Dora's heart better than she read it herself, and he saw there more jealous fondness of a living husband than angry memory of a dead brother's wrongs. The greatest sin of Florence Gale was ever to have been loved by him. This Dora never could forgive, and never could she cease triumphing in her heart over her defeated rival. She might, being a generous woman, strive against the feeling; but, whilst she loved her husband, jealousy would be too much for her, and she would strive in vain. It is not in a man's nature to be severe against such sins, and Mr. Templemore felt wonderfully lenient on hearing Dora confess her triumph over Mrs. Logan. He was not so vain, moreover, as to consider that lady plunged in irremediable grief for his sake, and he could not help thinking that, as he had had predecessors in her heart, so might he have a successor there too. But as he needed no protestations from Dora to convince him that he was her first love, so he required no vows to feel certain that no other image would replace his in her heart. He had known in his boyhood a white-haired woman, bright, gay, and cheerful, who had been three weeks a bride and fifty years a widow. She was witty and lovely, and was admired even to the brink of age; but none of her lovers—and they were many—could ever win her. Her young love had outlived both grief and youth. And as Mr. Templemore looked at his wife's pale face—as he heard her boast with involuntary frankness of her triumph over Flor-

ence—as he took her away with a smile from the dark room which had evoked all this, down to the cheerful room below, he thought: "Dora is such another woman as my great-aunt; if I were to die to-morrow, and she to live till threescore, I should still, dead or living, be her husband." And we need not wonder that, if Mr. Templemore was not so inexperienced or so exacting as to expect this exclusive affection, which is not, indeed, a very common sort of thing, yet he was not either so careless or so cold as not to feel mingled joy and pride in having inspired it. Never, therefore, could his wife have read more kindness in his looks than she could have read then—never could she have found more boundless indulgence for her imperfections than such as he was now willing to extend to her for this venial sin of loving him too fondly.

"I have had a letter from Eva this morning," he said, as they sat down on the sofa; "she mentions Mrs. Courtenay's safe arrival in Les Roches, with Mrs. Luan, I believe, and here is, I suppose, Mrs. Courtenay's own letter."

He handed it to her, but she gave it back to him.

"Read it to me," she said; "you will not be vexed if mamma says you took me away from her, like one of the Sabine maidens?"

Mr. Templemore smiled and obeyed.

"My dear child," began Mrs. Courtenay, "I really wish you would soon come back. Ever since your wedding-day, as I already told you, Mrs. Luan is unbearable. I CANNOT MANAGE HER! I must say I think it hard that Mr. Templemore compelled you to leave me in that cruel fashion. I cannot imagine why he thought *me* in the way. I wonder how he will like it when some man comes and whisks off Eva from *him*?"

"I shall not like it at all," candidly remarked Mr. Templemore, "but I shall have to bear with it."

"Eva was very glad to see me," resumed Mrs. Courtenay's epistle; "but is longing to have you and her father back. Miss Moore is prosy and stupid, as usual." Dora rather regretted having told Mr. Templemore to read her mother's letter, but took comfort on seeing him smile. "However," kindly resumed Mrs. Courtenay, "I attribute that just now to the fact that there is a host of horrible childish diseases about Les Roches. Croup, measles, and scarlatina, says Miss Moore."

Mr. Templemore read no more. His very lips had turned white with emotion. "I must go—go at once, and take Eva away," he said, scarcely able to command his voice.

"We must go," eagerly said Dora.

"No—no—I cannot make you travel so fast," he said, speaking more calmly; you must stay here!"

"Stay!—have you so soon forgotten your promise?" asked Dora, with a reproachful frown.

Yes, two days before she had extracted from him a fond pledge that he would never ask or expect to leave her. "I do not say that I shall never let you stir without me," had said Dora; "but I must have the right of going with you." If Mr. Templemore's honeymoon had been over, he might have demurred, but having been only thirteen days wedded, he knew not how to resist this charming despot, and he yielded all the more willingly that in the intoxication of his new passion it seemed impossible to him ever to cease to wish for the society of one so dear. So he promised, as most men in love would have promised, and now he was pledged to his word.

"And I shall not set you free," now said Dora, with a bright, fond smile; "I will be as exacting as any sorceress with any knight of romance. So let us go at once, and find Eva sound and well at the end of our journey."

"She is a sorceress," thought Mr. Templemore, as he left her to give orders for their

journey. "She is not beautiful, she is not even what people call very pretty, and yet—and yet." He needed no words to complete the picture his fancy called up. A face bright as sunshine, happy, radiant eyes, a light young figure, told him Dora's spell more potent than mere beauty, and infinitely more seducing.

But that bright face was clouded, and these happy eyes grew dim when he left her. Dora stood by the open window, and she looked out sadly on the verdant wilderness below her. She could not bear to leave that Eden—not, at least, to leave it so soon. Spite all her husband's fondness, Dora did not feel sure of him yet. She wanted time to become to him something more than a bright-haired girl, with fine eyes. She wanted to grow identified with and to be a portion of his daily life. She wished for nothing, and no one to break the fond spell she was weaving around him daily, alluring him from that other charm she had involuntarily cast upon him to a surer and more durable tenderness. Already she had by gentle arts won her way to some of the chambers of his heart. Already she knew thoughts which Mr. Templemore had never told another, and which had escaped him in fond and happy hours; but Dora felt that there lay more behind, and that a road, not arduous indeed, but mysterious, and with some perils, still divided her from the goal it was her fond ambition to win. She had no wish to rule, no wish even to influence, but she wished to be as near to Mr. Templemore as one human being can be to another, and it had rather disconcerted her to find that the very passion she inspired was an obstacle which retarded her progress. If even in perfect solitude, in unrestrained liberty, she could not have her husband as she wished to have him, how much harder would it be to have him thus with Eva to share his love, and others to divide his attention!

"And yet I shall prevail," she thought,

rousing herself from this passing despondency ; " I shall prevail. Eva loves me so dearly, that he cannot divide us in his affection ; and I am too fond of her to be jealous. She is mine now—mine as well as his, and the love he gives her he also gives to me. Les Roches is not so beautiful as Deenah, but surely my lot is altered since I beheld it first. Those trees, those alleys, that old house, are mine now—mine at least whilst they are his. And in Les Roches, because I have suffered so keenly, must Fate atone, and I shall be fully blest."

There was a triumphant gladness in the thought which conquered fear, but not regret, for solitude is sweet to love. When they left Deenah that afternoon Mr. Templemore saw the fond, wistful look his wife cast back toward the house, and as he happened to share her feelings, he said with a smile :

" I shall take Eva and Miss Moore to some safe spot, and then we shall come back here for the summer."

" Will you—will you ? " cried Dora, with sparkling eyes ; for she thought, " I have a whole summer before me."

They travelled fast, and reached Les Roches toward noon on a warm day in June. Dora's heart ached for Mr. Templemore, as she saw the agitation he could not repress when the château came within view. But as her glance wandered along the road, she uttered a sudden and joyful—

" Look—look ! "

For there, walking with Miss Moore in the shade was Eva herself, and Fido behind her. In a minute they were down, Eva sprang toward them with a joyful cry, and it would have been hard to say which of the two, Mr. Templemore or his wife, looked the happier, or kissed the child more fondly. For as she felt Eva's little arms clasping her neck so fondly, and heard her half sobbing, " Oh ! Dora—Cousin Dora ! " Dora thought with a beating heart—

" Yes, you love me, Eva—but can you ever love me as I love you—you who, though you do not know it, have given Cousin Dora the great, the perfect happiness of her life ? Poor Fido, you gave me nothing save your little honest heart—but I love you, too, so do not whine. Oh ! that the whole world, that every creature, could be as blest as I am now ! "

She looked so bright, so joyous, so like the poet's " phantom of delight," as these thoughts passed through her, that Mr. Templemore, looking at her with charmed eyes, exclaimed, in very unpoetic fashion, however,

" Dora ! I am a lucky fellow."

Dora had no time to answer ; Miss Moore now came up to them.

" It is such a comfort to have you here, Mr. Templemore," she said with a sigh, meant to express her satisfaction on his return, " we had such a dreadful day yesterday."

" My mother is surely not ill ! " cried Dora, with a sudden alarm.

" Oh ! dear, no, but that poor young man is raving. He got a sunstroke on the way, I believe, and he was raving before night. He is very bad to-day."

Dora grew white.

" What young man ? " she asked.

" Doctor Luan," composedly replied Miss Moore ; " he arrived yesterday afternoon, looking very odd, and flushed with that sunstroke—gentlemen ought to have parasols, in my opinion—and when he asked after you, and Miss Courtenay told him you were on your bridal tour, the surprise was too much for him. I never saw any one look so bad. I assure you, Mrs. Templemore, it made me feel quite concerned for him, poor young gentleman ! Well, before half an hour was over, he was violent, but he is not so now—only quite delirious."

Mr. Templemore looked at his wife. She seemed overwhelmed with confusion and grief, and could not bear her husband's fixed gaze. He withdrew it, and they all walked in si-

lence toward the house, Mr. Templemore thinking :

"This John Luan loved her—but surely Dora never cared for him, and yet how white she is!"

Some men are flattered to be the cause of infidelity, but Mr. Templemore was more jealous than vain, and the thought of a rival, even of one whom he had supplanted, was hateful to him. Was it possible that his wife had given to another those looks, those smiles, that shy fondness which were his now? He did not believe it, but the mere suspicion made him tremble with jealous resentment.

"Oh! what calamity brought John here?" thought Dora; "and how is it his mother never told him? But I know what *he* thinks, and he must not—oh! he must not!"

"Let Miss Moore and Eva go in without us," she said in a low voice to her husband, "I have something to say to you."

Mr. Templemore's color changed, but he complied with her request, and instead of entering the château, they stayed out in the flower-garden. Dora's heart felt very full. John, her cousin and her friend, was dying, perhaps, and Mr. Templemore suspected her of having jilted him. She forgave him, but she would not enter his house and cross his threshold with that suspicion upon her.

"I have something to say to you," she said again.

Mr. Templemore winced, and prepared himself for indulgence and forgiveness, but his wife asked neither from him.

"Richard," she said, "you told me that you married me for love, not for honor; let me tell you that if I, too, had not liked you, I could never have become your wife. I could no more sell myself for fair name than for money," she added, with a sudden light in her eyes.

There was a pause.

"Is that all you have to tell me, Dora?" asked Mr. Templemore.

"No; I am twenty-four, and I am not aware that if I had felt affection for any other man before I met you, it would have been a wrong in me to do so, provided such affection was true; but it so happens that I never did—never for one second—for one moment. I am content to be your last love; but it may be right you should know you are my first."

She spoke with a sadness that tempered the fondness of her confession. But the words she had uttered sent the blood up in a burning tide to Mr. Templemore's dark face. That last love of his, as Dora called it, was surely not the weakest. It was jealous and exacting. It would be denied nothing; and on learning that it had all, the past as well as the present, it was glad and triumphant, even though John Luan might be dying. But Dora could not forget the lover of her youth—the poor man who had come to woo with his cottage and his hundred a year; and her voice was subdued and low as she said:

"That is all I wished to say. Let us go in now."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE cards spread on the table before Mrs. Courtenay must have been going all wrong, for Mrs. Courtenay looked troubled and sad as Dora entered her room. On seeing her daughter, however, she uttered a joyful cry, and looked beaming.

"My dear child, I am so glad!" she exclaimed, running up to her; "how well you look!—and where is Mr. Templemore?"

"He is with poor John. Oh! mamma, what is the meaning of this?"

"We should have sent him cards, I suppose; he had a sunstroke, and hearing of your marriage finished him. Oh! what a life we have had of it! Miss Moore has so worried about measles, that I wish we were all dead and buried. I told her so; also, that it was a mis-

take of hers about measles, and that I did not believe in them."

Dora sighed ; she had left Paradise for earth and its cares.

"Have you seen your new room?" asked Mrs. Courtenay—"such a lovely room! Such beautiful things, all new—come and look at it."

She rose and led her to the apartment which had once been intended for Mrs. Logan. It had altered its aspect for Dora. She saw so at once, and the change smote her.

"I do not like her," she thought, "but why must I be happy at her expense? Why must John suffer because I am so blest?"

"Is it not pretty?" asked Mrs. Courtenay; "and Miss Moore cannot leave off wondering how fond he is of you! Every time something new came for you, she cried, 'Why, he dotes on Miss Courtenay!'"

"Oh! I am happy—very happy," replied Dora; "but my heart aches for poor John."

"And so does mine; only, you see, you could not marry them both," innocently remarked Mrs. Courtenay.

"Oh! how good—how kind he is!" exclaimed Dora, looking around her and seeing with every glance new tokens of her husband's affection; "only why cannot we be happy but that others must suffer?"

"I wish John would get well, and would marry Florence," gravely said Mrs. Courtenay; "it would be so nice, and so like a novel, where people change about, you know!"

If Dora could have smiled then, she would have smiled at the suggestion. Florence losing the master of Deenah, and taking up with a poor doctor! It was like her innocent little mother to think of such a thing!

"And where is John?" she asked with a heavy sigh; "I must go and see him."

"In the room next his mother's; only, my dear, you must go alone, please—it makes me miserable, and does poor John no good—be-

sides, Mrs. Luan, poor soul, is so fierce that I am afraid of her."

Again Dora sighed, for again she thought, "Oh! why must my happiness cost others so dear!"

Mrs. Luan's room was vacant, but through the half-open door of the next apartment Dora saw her aunt sitting alone by a large white bed. That room was darkened, and though Dora saw her aunt's bending figure very plainly, she guessed more than she perceived, that the bed was occupied. Mr. Templemore she did not see. He was already gone. With something like hesitation and fear, Dora entered the sick-room; and standing on the threshold she said: "Aunt, may I come in?"

Mrs. Luan raised her head, and Dora started back at the sight of her face. It is said that criminals shrink into old men within the few minutes that precede their execution; and even so had age—decrepit age—overtaken this sullen, heavy-looking woman within the last few hours. She stared at Dora with a dull, vacant stare; then suddenly recognizing her, she started up, and walked up to her with an aspect so fierce that Dora involuntarily shrank back.

"And so you come to look at him!" said Mrs. Luan, with rage sparkling in her eyes, "you come to look at him, do you?"

"Aunt, I am grieved to the heart."

"Grieved!" interrupted Mrs. Luan, stamping her foot and shaking her head at her—"grieved, are you! Then how dare you marry Mr. Templemore, when you knew it would kill John?"

Dora could not answer one word.

"And that is my reward," continued Mrs. Luan, her wrath rising as she spoke. "I made you all you are, and all the time you had promised to marry John! I tell you you had—I tell you you had!" she cried, her voice rising as she read denial in Dora's eyes, "deny

it if you dare—deny it if you dare!” she repeated defiantly.

“If I were on my doathbed I would deny it!” cried Dora, roused into self-defence. “You wrong me—you wrong me! Why did you not tell John I was married? Why did you let him come here? Aunt, I know you did not wish John to marry me since I lost my money; but I say it is you, not I, who have been pitiless to him.”

Mrs. Luan started at her. It was this girl whom she had raised to her present height who could thus taunt and reprove her.

“Oh! you are very grand and proud because you are Mr. Templemore’s wife,” she said, nodding at Dora, “but you might remember you would not be his wife but for me.”

Dora colored deeply. “I know you must have told him where he could find us in Kensington,” she faltered.

“Oh! pretend you do not understand—do! Pretend you do not know who told Mrs. Logan he was with you that night. Eh!”

Dora looked petrified. Her lips parted, her eyes were fixed on Mrs. Luan, then a dreadful light seemed to break upon her.

“And was it you who did that?” she said at length—“was it you?”

The question enraged Mrs. Luan.

“Ask me—do!” she cried; “ask me!”

“Aunt,” piteously exclaimed Dora, “can this be? Did you do it to make Mr. Templemore marry me?”

“I did,” replied Mrs. Luan with a sort of shriek—“I did!—and because I helped you to a rich husband, to fine clothes and houses and money, my boy must die—he must die!” she repeated, with a low, wailing moan; “and hear how he laughs at it all!” she added, as a loud fit of laughter came from John Luan’s bed, “hear how merry he is!”

“No, I do not believe you—it is not possible. I cannot be so miserable—Heaven is too just to allow such things,” cried Dora in

the despair of her heart. “Aunt, you are ill, quite ill with grief—you have dreamed all this—you never did this thing—never—never!”

“I did!”

“But why did you do it? Oh! why?” asked Dora in a voice full of agony. “Why do it, aunt—why do it?”

“Because I never liked Florence—and because he was rich.”

“And because you did not wish me to marry John,” said Dora, in a transport of anger she could not repress; “you ruined Mrs. Logan’s happiness, you risked my fair name, you robbed Mr. Templemore of his liberty—and all that I might not marry John.”

“And so you taunt me with it!” sullenly said Mrs. Luan; “wait awhile, my lady—wait awhile! I have been silent, but I can speak. I wonder what he will say when he knows it. Ha! ha! I have you there. You have robbed me of a son, but perhaps I can rob you of a husband. He will turn me out of the house, but I don’t care—you and he shall not be happy whilst John is dying.”

She spoke calmly now, but her calmness was more terrible than her wrath. A great agony came over Dora as she heard her, and she was seized with a faintness as that of death. Her husband loved her, but how would he feel if he learned that he had been cheated into marrying her!

“Aunt,” she said, recovering by a strong effort, “you must not do that, you must not. God knows, if I could repair Mr. Templemore’s wrong, ay, or even Mrs. Logan’s wrong, I would do it, though my heart-strings should break; but I cannot—we are married, tied for life—you must not speak, you must not.”

She raised her hand with a quiet gesture of command, like one who has uttered an unanswerable proposition. But Mrs. Luan shook back two dark locks which had fallen over her face, and looked at her with the defiance of a tigress whose cub has been wounded.

"Think of my boy," she said, "and expect no mercy. I have given you a rich husband, and you only mock and upbraid me for it. Do you think I will see him die," she added, nodding toward the bed, "and see you both sleep sound and live happy? No—no!"

It was useless to argue with her. This was not remorse, repentance, or even sorrow, it was the madness of despair. It was useless to argue, but it might not be useless to entreat. Dora felt distracted with fear and grief. She went up to her aunt, she caught her two hands, she pressed them to her bosom with passionate emotion.

"Aunt, spare me," she said; "what have I done that you should hate me? Was I not like a daughter to you?"

"Why does he rave about you?" interrupted Mrs. Luan. "I bore him, I suckled him, I reared him through privation and sorrow, I would have died for him, and it is you whom he raves about. Would he be lying there in brain-fever if he had found *me* dead?"

"Then you will have no pity?" said Dora, dropping her aunt's hands.

Mrs. Luan looked at her in sullen silence. All the passionate Irish vehemence of Dora's nature awoke within her. She sank on her knees before her aunt, she raised her clasped hands.

"Have mercy!" she cried, "for John's sake have mercy on me. Be silent, in order that Heaven may hear your prayers, and grant us both his life. Leave me my husband—leave him to me. He is my life, my only supreme good, and he loves me—he loves me. Do not shake that love in his heart by so cruel a confession. Remember that he is my husband; he must forget Mrs. Logan now, and love but me. I know that as yet his is only a man's passion for youth, and what he thinks beauty—but give me time, aunt, give me time, and that love shall be more. I shall have his whole heart yet. I will be his friend, his companion, his mistress, his wife, everything

which a woman can be to her husband, if you will but give me time."

Oh! if he had seen her then! If he had seen that pale face, breathless with entreaty, those deep, impassioned eyes—if he had heard that pathetic voice vainly imploring one who knew not mercy! Dora saw she had failed, but she still prayed.

"Give me a few days," she said, "just a few days, aunt."

Mrs. Luan laughed bitterly.

"Well, then, aunt, give me one day, give me one," entreated Dora; "let me be happy and beloved till to-morrow." Mrs. Luan shook her head in obstinate denial; but Dora clung to her with ardent importunity. "Give me one day," she entreated. "Oh! aunt, give me one. I have not been married three weeks. Let me be happy a few hours longer. Let me—let me. And—oh! if prayers are heard in heaven, how I will pray that John may live!"

Poor Dora, she asked to be happy when her happiness was her sin.

"Let me go!" said her aunt, sullenly. "John wants me."

Dora rose without a word, she released Mrs. Luan from her clasp; she compelled herself to say calmly:

"Aunt, I trust you will meet with more mercy than you show to me;" and with these words she left the room and went down-stairs.

She walked out into the garden bareheaded, and reckless of the hot sun. She felt distracted with sorrow. Her pride was stung to think that she had been forced on Mr. Templemore, and her heart was tortured beforehand at the thought of what his feelings would be when he knew it. Would his love go back to the wronged woman, whom her aunt had betrayed, and leave her, his wretched wife, all plundered and forlorn? It was agony to think it—an agony so keen that she stood still, and wondered she did not expire with grief at the thought.

"Dora," said a fond, reproving voice.

She turned round with a thrill of joy. He knew nothing; he loved her still. Yes, for a few moments, for a few hours, perhaps, her husband was her own.

"What brings you out here bareheaded in that hot sun?" he asked, with gentle chiding.

"Yes, he loves me still," thought Dora, looking at him with sad, earnest eyes; but her only answer was: "Have you seen him?—how is he?"

"In great danger, I fear."

"And Eva—when do you take her away?" she asked, almost eagerly, "she must not stay here, you know."

"No, she must not. Miss Moore is getting ready. They leave this evening."

"But you go with them—do you not?—you go with them."

"Not whilst that poor fellow is all but dying in my house."

A sort of anguish passed over Dora's face, but Mr. Templemore did not read its meaning.

"He may live," he said, kindly.

"God grant he may!" she replied in a low tone; "but what will your presence here do him?—I shall not feel happy if you do not accompany Eva and Miss Moore." Mr. Templemore looked so amazed at this speech that Dora added, "I have a presentiment of evil—a foreboding I cannot conquer."

She looked so deadly pale, that Mr. Templemore was filled with concern.

"You have seen that poor young man, and it has been too much for you," he said.

"No, I only saw his mother. How strange and wild she is!—don't you think she is mad?" she added, standing still in the path they were following.

"Mad!—she was perfectly calm half an hour ago, Dora."

"Yes, she is always so with you," replied Dora, with involuntary bitterness.

Mr. Templemore did not answer, but he

thought his wife's manner strange. They walked on in silence till they reached that old bench on which Dora had seen her husband and Florence sitting side by side. Never had the quiet spot looked darker or cooler than it did now. Never had its green shade been more delicious and alluring than it was on this warm afternoon.

"Let us rest," she said.

He sat down, nothing loth. Later, he knew the meaning of a change in his wife's manner which now perplexed him—later, he knew why she passed thus suddenly from the sadness of despair to this feverish joy. He would not go—he would not believe anything she could urge against Mrs. Luan; she was doomed, she was hopeless, then let her be happy and beloved whilst happiness and love were still within her grasp. She rested her head on his shoulder with unwonted familiarity; she looked up at him with sad though undisguised affection, and she said, with the daring of despair:

"It seems impossible sometimes that you should like me—do you? Tell me so, that I may believe it, and feel sure."

Mr. Templemore was not given to the language of protestation or endearment, but something in her look and tone now stirred the very fibres of his heart. He answered her question as a man in love might answer it when such a question is put by a wife young and fondly loved—half in jest, half in earnest, yet with unconscious and involuntary fervor. Dora heard him in silence. The spot was beautiful, and cool, and lonely, but she could not forget that a month before she had seen Mr. Templemore there with another woman. The birds that sang so sweetly above them had not changed their mates, the young leaves on the trees had not lost their spring beauty, and yet his love for that woman was sear and dead.

"How will he feel when he knows he was

cheated into marrying me?" thought Mr. Templemore's wife. Then she remembered her dead brother, whom this man, now so dear, had supplanted in his fortune, in Florence Gale's love, and lastly, in her own heart; she remembered John Luan lying up-stairs, and raving about her, and his mother mad with grief: and thus surrounded with calamities, past or present, or yet to come, she felt like the ancient criminals before whom a delightful feast was set, because they were to die. "Why should I not do like them?" thought Dora—"the past is irrevocable, the future is uncertain, but the present is mine. I may be a beggar to-morrow, but I am a queen to-day."

She roused herself, she compelled herself to be happy and gay, and, above all, she put by the silent shyness of her usual manner with Mr. Templemore, and she did her best to charm him. The task was an easy one. This bright young creature, so full of life and gladness, enchanted him. Few men like tame happiness, and most are pleased with variety.

"I have got a new Dora to-day," he could not help saying to her—"I have had a silent Dora, a shy Dora, a proud Dora. and to-day I have a brilliant Dora."

"A proud Dora!" she repeated—"when was I proud?"

"You will not let me give you anything."

"You have given me a wedding-ring," she replied, with sudden emotion; "provided you never repent it, I shall be happy."

Repent it!—he seemed amused at the thought; but he again reproached her for her pride.

"Oh! give me anything you please," she said, a little carelessly—"diamonds, if you like."

"Why not?" he asked, a little shortly—"why should I not give you a diamond bracelet?"

Dora looked at him very earnestly.

"Not a bracelet—give me a cross; it is an emblem of suffering, and when I feel too happy, it will help to subdue me, and remind me of to-day."

Mr. Templemore smiled, and replied that she should have a diamond cross to wear around her neck.

"Yes, I believe I have a pretty neck, and that he admires it," thought Dora, with silent despair; "but what will he care for that to-night?"

She could not forget it, and when Mr. Templemore rose from the bench, and said it was time to go in, she gave a start of terror. She had but one thought—to delay the fatal moment. To some extent she succeeded; she never left his side. At first Mr. Templemore did not object to this fond inquisition, but it was inquisition, and he soon felt it, and wondered at it. He wondered, too, at Dora's silence; her fitful spirits were fled, and she looked deeply depressed.

"You are as mute as a bird when the storm is coming on," said Mr. Templemore, who little knew how apt was his simile. "You are tired. Lie down on the sofa."

They were in her old sitting-room on the ground-floor when he spoke thus.

"Yes, I shall lie down," said Dora, languidly. She closed her eyes, in order not to be obliged to speak. He thought she was sleeping, and soon rose to leave her; but ere he had reached the door she had started to her feet and stood before him in breathless fear. "Do not leave me," she entreated. "I cannot bear it."

Mr. Templemore could scarcely believe his ears. Fear, real fear, was in her whole aspect. It was very unlike Dora Courtenay, so proud, so brave, to be thus childishly afraid of solitude.

"I shall ring for Fanny," he said.

"No, no, stay with me. I want you."

She was petulant, wilful, and yet fond, and

she had her way. Mr. Templemore was ashamed and vexed to yield. He began to think that he had a capricious Dora as well as a charming one; but her tender and obstinate entreaties prevailed. Mr. Templemore chid her, but he did not go; that reprieve was granted to her.

"What if I were to tell him myself?" once thought Dora, seeing how kind and indulgent he was; but her heart failed her at the thought—besides, faint hope crept into her heart as time passed. If John got better, her aunt might relent, and she might yet be saved.

CHAPTER XL.

MR. TEMPLEMORE'S sister-in-law wanted to speak to him, and Mr. Templemore, it was found, after a quarter of an hour's search, was with his wife in the room which had been the governess's sitting-room. But Miss Moore had good reason for not choosing to speak to him there, and she sent a civil message, full of apologies, but implying plainly her wish for a private interview. Dora, who held her husband's hand, as if she had feared he should escape her, was obliged to relinquish her hold. She could not go with him, she could not bid him stay, she could only say:

"You will soon come back?"

"Very soon," he replied, cheerfully.

He went, rather pleased at having made his escape, for he wished to see John Luan again, and he did not want his wife to accompany him and encounter that sad sight. "Shall I go and see him first?" he thought, as he went up the staircase. "Miss Moore can wait a few minutes." So, instead of entering the drawing-room on his right, he turned toward Mrs. Luan's room on his left.

But scarcely had Mr. Templemore entered the sick-room, when the door which he had closed opened again, and Dora appeared, pale

and breathless. She had guessed all, and followed him.

"My darling, what brings you here?" he asked, with gentle reproof. "It is a sad, a very sad sight for you."

A loud, appalling fit of laughter from the sick-bed confirmed his words.

"Mrs. Luan raised her bowed head and looked at them. Dora stood near her husband. His arm was passed around her with protecting tenderness; her eyes were raised to his with something beyond love in their gaze—something of the worship and despair of a lost spirit looking her last of paradise, for she thought, "Now the time has come!"

John Luan's mother rose on perceiving them, and Mr. Templemore saw aunt and niece exchange a look so strange that it amazed him. Why did Mrs. Luan's eyes gaze so fiercely on his wife, and why did Dora turn so deadly pale as her own eyes met them? He began to understand that something which concerned him, but of which he was kept ignorant, lay hidden under those silent looks—some war, some contest! What could it be? Why had Dora followed him?

"How is your son, Mrs. Luan?" he asked, gravely.

"How is he!" she angrily echoed. "Why do you ask? Why do you come? What brings you both here? Could you not stay away? Is it to taunt him that you come? Look at them, John, look at them!"

"Is that woman mad, as Dora says," thought Mr. Templemore, "or what is it?"

She stood by the bed looking at her son, and pointing with a scornful forefinger to Mr. Templemore and his wife. Then turning upon them with sudden fury—

"Begone!" she said; "begone, or I will make you repent having come near him!"

Mr. Templemore did not move, and Dora only clung closer to him; but she looked at her aunt with mingled dread and entreaty.

"Ha! I can make you quake, my lady!" said Mrs. Luan, nodding at her pale niece. "I gave you a husband, and you robbed me of a son in return—but I can make you quake!"

"Aunt—*aunt!*" implored Dora.

Mrs. Luan laughed, and John Luan, who had been silent awhile, tossed restlessly in his bed, and laughed with his mother.

"You hear him!" she cried, stamping her foot and looking angrily at Dora; "go, I say!—go both of you this moment!"

"Richard, let us go away!" entreated Dora; "oh! let us go away!"

But no more than before did Mr. Templemore stir. He darted piercing looks from Mrs. Luan to his wife. There was something—some hidden quarrel between these two women—a threat on one hand and fear on the other, for he felt Dora tremble in every limb. What was it?—what could it be?

"Dora," he said, in a low, kind tone, and drawing her more closely to him as he spoke thus, bending over her—"Dora, what is it? Trust in me."

The words were like dew from heaven. She threw her arms around his neck. "Oh! forgive me!" she cried; "forgive me!—I could not help it!"

He returned the caress, and again he said, "What is it?—trust in me."

Mrs. Luan answered that question.

"So you could not help it, forsooth," she said, her eyes sparkling with rage. "Are these my thanks for making you Mr. Templemore's wife?" she added, rolling her head from left to right, as if confounded at Dora's ingratitude. "Are these my thanks for parting him from Mrs. Logan, whom you so hated?"

Mr. Templemore, who had listened astounded, now started as if he had been stung.

"You part me from Mrs. Logan!" he cried, his eyes flashing; "'tis false!—you dare not!—you could not!"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Luan, with a sullen nod, "you always scorned me—I was stupid, was I? But I could make you put by one woman and marry another, clever man though you were, and foolish woman though you thought me."

The insolence of this boast exasperated Mr. Templemore. "I tell you 'tis false!—false!" he said sternly; "you never did it!"

"Did I not, though? Who made Florence jealous? 'Twas I, Mr. Templemore. Who gave something to Eva that made her ill, and who told you to go to Dora that night whilst Florence was watching? 'Twas I. Ask her, ask Florence, ask Mrs. Logan, if you do not believe me."

Mr. Templemore looked thunderstruck.

"No, you could not be so base," he said; "you could not be so cruel as to tamper with my child for that object—you could not. I had heaped you and yours with benefits—you could not pay me back thus!"

"Benefits! Yes, you robbed me and John and Paul and Dora of my brother's money, and you threw us a bone in return. And you wanted to marry that Florence Gale, who jilted Paul. No, no, Mr. Templemore, I said you should marry my niece, and you did—you did!"

Dora, overwhelmed with shame and grief, hid her burning face in her hands. Mr. Templemore could not speak.

"You thought me stupid," said Mrs. Luan again; "you thought me stupid, eh?" She said no more, but sat down again by her son.

There was a brief silence. A sorrow too keen for anger or indignation had fallen on Mr. Templemore.

"Poor Florence!" he said, with a quivering lip; "poor, foolish Florence!"

His troubled eye fell on Dora as he spoke. Perhaps he did not see her, but that look, so far away, so remote, cut her to the heart. She withdrew from his side, and he did not

detain or call her back; he stood as the blow had struck him—pale, motionless, and, save those words, silent. Dora forgot her own grief in the sight of his.

"Richard," she said, coming back to him, and her tears flowing, "forgive me if I cannot set you free!—forgive me!" Her eyes were raised to his, tears were on her cheeks, and her look seemed to say, "Oh! dare I be happy again?"

He laid his hand on her shoulder, he looked down at her very sorrowfully, but with returning tenderness, and that sad look seemed to reply: "Be happy, my darling, be happy!"

John Luan's mother stared at them with jealous, angry eyes. Her son, whom the happiness of these two had brought to death's door, lay on his sick-bed, pale, breathless, exhausted with delirium, and they stood there happy and fond, braving her with the insolence of their love.

"You little hypocrite!" she cried, starting to her feet, and shaking her resentful hand at Dora, "how dare you make me do it? How dare you, and be jilting John all the time?"

"I!" cried Dora, amazed at the imputation; "I made you do it?"

"Yes—deny it now—do!"

"Oh! Richard, Richard," said Dora, with sudden anguish; "you will never believe that, will you?"

"Believe that *you* could abet this miserable woman," he replied, with scorn; "believe *that*, Dora!"

"And so I am to bear the burden of the sin, and you are to reap the benefit!" cried Mrs. Luan, enraged—"you who made me do it. I say it again!"

"Peace!" said Mr. Templemore, turning sternly upon her. "But for your son's sake, you should leave the house this instant. As it is, I forbid you from this day forth ever to address my wife again!"

"Of course not," answered Mrs. Luan, with

much scorn; "I am too wicked, and she is too good. I promised her she should become your wife, and now that I have kept my word I must not speak to my lady!"

Mr. Templemore looked both indignant and incredulous.

"Dora," he said—"Dora joining in a plot so shameful!—Dora abetting you in entrapping Mrs. Logan!—Dora helping to work her own disgrace! It is false!"

"'Tis true," doggedly replied Mrs. Luan.

Dora turned crimson with indignation and shame. She left her husband's side. She went up to her aunt, she laid her hand on Mrs. Luan's arm, and, looking her steadily in the face, she said firmly:

"Aunt, how dare you say it?—how dare you say it, with John Luan lying there?"

"And how dare you deny it?" cried Mrs. Luan, placing either hand on Dora's shoulders, and looking at her wildly; "did I not promise the first day we all entered this house—did I not promise you should become its mistress? Deny that if you dare!"

Mr. Templemore looked at Dora; she was ashy pale, and her lips quivered, but she was mute.

"And did you, or did your mother, ask me how I was to make you Mr. Templemore's wife?—how I was to part him and Florence Gale? Did either of you question or try to know, or say, 'Do not do it?' Not once—not once."

Mr. Templemore again looked at his wife. She could not bear that look; her eyes sank before his.

"She can't deny it!" triumphantly exclaimed Mrs. Luan. "You know," she added, turning pitilessly on Dora, "you know you taxed me with it the next morning. 'Aunt,' you said, 'who did this?' You knew 'twas I, but you said nothing to Mrs. Logan—you liked Mr. Templemore. Deny that—and also that you hated Florence?"

Dora denied nothing. The net that ensnared her was drawing so close around her that she felt both fettered and tongue-tied. No, she could not deny her aunt's predictions, she could not deny her love and her hatred, now both turning against her with such vengeful power. She had boasted of both to him, and both now stood up as implacable witnesses to condemn her. She felt it, and she also felt lost, ruined, and undone.

Cold drops of perspiration stood thick on Mr. Templemore's brow. Once more he had been cheated and betrayed, but this time how frightfully! He had been robbed of the woman he loved, and entrapped into marrying another, and the best feelings of his nature—generosity, pity, honor—had been enlisted to work out his undoing. A colder man, or a less generous one, a man of inferior nature, could never have thus succumbed nor fallen into this mean trap. He had been duped by the contemptible woman before him, and Dora had been her tacit accomplice. An innocent though foolish woman had been driven into the madness of jealousy that this family, whom he had treated with romantic generosity, might fasten upon him for life, and he, the rich man, might become the poor girl's husband. And Dora had shared the baseness even as she had reaped the benefit.

She had not laid the trap; no—but she had let him fall into it, and never, by helping hand, or even by word or sign, tried to save him. She had done nothing deliberate, but she had allowed another to act; and when all was ready—when Florence and he had become her victims, when pity and honor had made him turn to her, she had appeared before him with the pale and troubled beauty of a proud and fair martyr—she had ensnared him with her youth and her hidden love, and wakened in his heart a passion so violent and so engrossing that it completed her double triumph over Mrs. Logan. Yes, and as these thoughts passed

through him with the cruel rapidity of lightning, it stung Mr. Templemore to feel that she had robbed Florence of her lover, even more than of her husband. He turned upon her, wrath and grief in his looks.

"Madam, speak!" he said impetuously and imperiously. "Do you not hear that you are accused?—speak, I say!"

Thus adjured, Dora looked up.

"I am innocent," she said.

"Innocent!" said her aunt; "yes, you never questioned—you did not want to know—you let me do it, and now, like a coward, you want to escape the blame. Let Mr. Templemore ask your mother if I did not promise that you should marry him, that's all."

Dora saw the angry light that passed through Mr. Templemore's eyes as her aunt uttered these words; she looked from him, her judge, to Mrs. Luan, her accuser.

"I am innocent," she said again.

Mrs. Luan laughed scornfully, and Mr. Templemore was mute. For a while she too stood silent, then a coldness as that of death seemed to fall on her heart. She turned away and left the room without a word.

Mr. Templemore walked up to Mrs. Luan, and seizing her arm, he looked down in her face, and said sternly,

"What was your motive?"

His look, his tone, alike mastered her.

"I did not want her to marry John?" she answered.

He smiled bitterly. He had been sacrificed that John might be safe.

"And what was *her* motive?" he asked again.

"You know it," sulkily replied Mrs. Luan; "she liked you."

Yes, some men are betrayed for their money, but Mr. Templemore had been cheated out of his liberty for love. For love! He bit his lip till it bled, and he grasped Mrs. Luan's arm so tightly that she said with some anger,

"Let me go; you hurt me. Why do you put it all upon me? Mrs. Courtenay was always talking about it, and Dora was fretting to have you. I did you no wrong, after all—you liked Dora, you know you did."

"I liked her! you dare to tell me that? I liked your niece whilst I was pledged to Mrs. Logan."

"Never mind, you like her now," was Mrs. Luan's ironical reply.

"I like her now?"

"Yes, and let me go—I say you hurt me."

"Let you go?" he replied, dropping her arm with a look of the deepest contempt. "Mrs. Luan, I leave the house to day—let me not find you here, or your son, or your sister, when I come back."

"And Dora," defiantly asked Mrs. Luan, "are you going to turn out Dora?—you can't, you know—she is your wife."

"She may rue it yet," he said, his eyes flashing with anger, "but she shall stay here, of course; as for you, Mrs. Luan—do not trust to my forbearance for your son—leave soon—leave quickly."

He left the room as he uttered the words. As he closed the door he met Mrs. Courtenay. Without a word of preface or courteous greeting, with a sternness which she had never seen in him, he stopped her and said:

"Mrs. Courtenay, is it true that when I brought you to this house, with your sister-in-law and Dora, you contemplated that I should marry your daughter?"

Mrs. Courtenay knew nothing, but Mr. Templemore's manner and looks frightened her.

"Oh! Mr. Templemore," she implored, "do not be angry with poor Dora, do not."

"Oh! I am not angry—not at all, Mrs. Courtenay, I only want to know if Mrs. Luan did really, as she tells me, promise Dora that she should become my wife?"

"She did," eagerly replied Mrs. Courtenay, by no means loath to throw all the blame on

her sister-in-law, "she did, as soon as she found out you were Mr. Templemore."

"Oh! of course not before," ironically replied Mr. Templemore; "and your daughter, Mrs. Courtenay, she raised no objection?"

"Mr. Templemore, she liked you."

"Ah! to be sure; an excellent reason. Thank you for your candor, Mrs. Courtenay," he added, sarcastically.

He turned away, but his mother-in-law followed him anxiously.

"Then you are not angry with Dora?" she said.

"Oh! not at all," replied Mr. Templemore. "I am too happy to have your daughter on any terms!"

The words were very bitter, if Mrs. Courtenay had but understood them rightly, but the mood in which they were spoken was far more bitter still. Love, tenderness, passion, everything that had once made Dora dear, seemed to have vanished in the humiliation of his betrayal. To be duped, to be deceived, to be made a tool and a jest of—such had been Mr. Templemore's lot.

CHAPTER XLI.

"Miss Moore is very anxious to speak to you, sir," said Fanny, meeting her master.

"Very well," he replied, with bitter impatience, and, retracing his steps, he went back to the drawing-room.

Miss Moore was not alone. A lady stood in the middle of the room, attired in a travelling-dress, with a shawl on her arm, and looking as if she were going to step that moment into a railway carriage. And that lady was Mrs. Logan. She laughed at Mr. Templemore's amazed look, and curtsied to him with mock politeness.

"Oh! but I must see Mrs. Luan too," she said, nodding ironically. "I am not afraid of

her now, though I was so silly as to think her mad, you know. I must see her with you, Mr. Templemore."

"Never!" he answered angrily. "Mrs. Luan leaves this house to-day, and never will I address her, or willingly remain five seconds in the same room with her."

Miss Moore clasped her hands and said pitifully, "I knew it could not end well;" whilst Mrs. Logan exclaimed scornfully, "Poor Mrs. Luan! is it so soon over?"

Mr. Templemore looked angrily at these two women. His blood was boiling within him, and seeing Florence fresh as a rose, and taunting him so lightly with his lost liberty, he forgot her wrong, and only remembered that her folly had abetted Mrs. Luan's cunning, and helped to his undoing.

"Dear me, Mr. Templemore, how odd you do look!" ironically said Florence. "Well, I shall not trouble you long. I owe you an answer to a question, and I come to give it. I have been waiting for your return this fortnight. I would not write—letters get opened by the wrong people, and not delivered sometimes to the right person. I am getting shrewd and clever, you see. Well, I must not miss the train, so you will excuse me if I come to the point. You wanted to know, when I last had the pleasure of meeting you, through whose agency I had entered this house and surprised you with Miss Courtenay on the night of the storm. You were kind enough to suppose that I bribed the servants. Allow me now to tell you that the person who admitted me, who received, and guided, and helped me, was your wife's aunt. To her, Mr. Templemore, you thus owe your present happiness, and I am not so cruel or so unjust as to rob that good and kind Mrs. Luan of your gratitude."

"Yes, Mrs. Logan," replied Mr. Templemore, with emphatic bitterness, "you fell into a trap, and now that you see it, it is too late."

"I can't help it," she said, desperately. "You might as well tell a bird not to be caught as tell me not to be deceived. Besides, why did you let them deceive you, Mr. Templemore?"

His color deepened, his dark eyes flashed, he bit his lip to check the angry words that might have come up as she put the taunting question. Ay, he too had been snared by the net of the fowler, and its meshes were woven thick around him. Adieu to a noble life, adieu to liberty, ay, and almost adieu to honor! Never more should his footsteps be free, never more should he know the happy solitude of his own thoughts; he was tied, till death should part them, to that girl who, innocent or guilty, had stepped in between him and all his desires. What though she had wakened in him the folly of a moment? Was he the man to go on loving a woman for the soft, shy look of her eyes and the pretty turn of her neck? She loved him, perhaps—she had said so, at least, and he remembered her fond confession with a sort of fury—but had she entrapped him because of that love? Had he given her a double triumph over him—that of first deceiving his judgment, then of conquering his proud heart?

"Yes," he said, "you are right, Mrs. Logan—I, too, have been cheated, and where is our remedy?" he added, the veins in his forehead swelling with anger, as he felt both his wrong and his powerlessness to avenge it. "Where is our remedy? We have been deceived and betrayed. Mrs. Luan was the arbitress of our fate, though we knew it not, and we must bow to her decrees."

"Yes, it was Mrs. Luan's doing, but it was Dora Courtenay's too," cried Mrs. Logan, with her old jealous anger. "She planned it, and she did it, Mr. Templemore."

He turned pale as death, and moved away from her side; and when he came back he looked at her and Miss Moore, and said:

"Do not say it—do not believe it, Mrs. Logan. She is my wife. You made her such, remember that, and also that her honor and mine are one."

"You want me to be silent!" she cried. "I will not—I will not, Mr. Templemore. The world shall know, and the world shall judge between her and me."

"Do as you please. You will find my wife guarded by something to which the world, skeptical though it may be, ever adds faith—the respect of her husband."

"Your wife!" repeated Mrs. Logan, turning pale at something in the tone with which he uttered the word "wife."—"Yes, I know she is your wife, Mr. Templemore, and you are newly married, too, and, of course, your honeymoon not being over—"

She ceased, and looked at him. The blood had rushed up to his very brows—his very heart was thrilled at the remembrance of his lost happiness. He could not help it. A passion, even though it be but two weeks old, cannot be conquered at once in a man's heart; and as Florence spoke, there came back to him, not the remembrance of the love which had bound them—not the resentment of the fraud by which they had been divided, but fervid and sudden, like the glimpse of a warm summer landscape, the memory of those two impassioned weeks which he had given to another woman. Florence stood before him, beautiful, angry, and jealous, and he saw Dora, pale, beseeching, and sorrowful—Dora, with love in her upraised eyes and her parted lips. He saw her, do what he would; but with angry wonder he also asked himself what brought her image before him then, why days had been stronger than years, and why he thought of the girl who had ensnared him, whilst he looked at the chosen one of his heart?

"She is not innocent!" cried Mrs. Logan, breaking off from sarcasm into impetuous ac-

cusation. "Did I not say to her, 'Tell me how it happened—explain it, Dora, and I will believe you,' and did she not turn away without a word—without a word? I tell you, Mr. Templemore, that she plotted to marry you from the moment she entered your house." —

"She did not!" he said, sullenly.

"Then why did she marry you?"

"She had her fair name to redeem, thanks to you."

"Ay, she risked much, but she won—she won, and I lost; but it is not all gain to her, Mr. Templemore. The world will have something to say to her yet."

"Then the world will lie!" cried Mr. Templemore, his dark cheek crimsoning, and his voice trembling with passion as the pure and pale image of his young wife seemed to rise before him. In all his misery it was something to know that—so far, at least, she was innocent. Of that knowledge nothing and no one could rob him. Mrs. Logan looked at him, then clasped her hands in indignant amazement.

"Mr. Templemore," she said, "were you Mrs. Luan's accomplice, and was all this a plot to make me break my engagement, and set you free?"

He gazed at her more in sorrow than in anger. She was unchanged, after all. She read the meaning of his cold, grave looks, but she would persist in this new outrageous fancy.

"I know what you think," she said, speaking very fast—"you think she is the same silly creature she ever was; but I am not so foolish as you imagine me to be, Mr. Templemore, and I say that you always liked her—always, Mr. Templemore—and that, if she had been a plain girl, you would not have married her from honor."

"If Dora Courtenay had been a plain girl, you would never have suspected her, Mrs. Logan."

"Yes, yes, I know; but tell me, if you can,

"I did not marry her for love"—just tell me that, if you can, Mr. Templemore?"

"I decline your right to put such a question," he coldly answered; "you broke our engagement, Mrs. Logan."

She sank down on a chair, and burst into tears. Mr. Templemore stood by her side, and as he beheld her sorrow, he looked around him with mingled grief and shame—the shame which a noble heart feels at its own frailty. That room, those pictures, those familiar objects, all seemed to upbraid him with infidelity. Here he had been calmly, purely blest. Here gentle love, not feverish passion, had held him in tender bonds. Here an innocent, though not brilliant woman, had loved him—here it had been sweet to sit with her day after day, forestalling the peace of marriage, and not taking into marriage the troubled joy of unwedded love.

Florence wept on as if her heart would break, but dull and heavy felt Mr. Templemore's heart. He did not love her—he did not love his wife—he loved no woman then. Twice love had cost him so dear, that now he felt as if he were too poor ever to buy it back again. The tears of Florence pained him, but so would those of Eva if they had had the same bitter cause to flow. With a sort of wonder at his own coldness, he remembered how dear this wronged woman had once been, and now he could gaze on her as if from a remote shore. His love was dead, and dead, too, felt that other love which had suddenly flowed between them, and wrought in a few weeks the work of time.

"I must go now," said Mrs. Logan, rising as she spoke.

Even as she said it, the door opened, and Dora entered the room. Miss Moore looked scared, Florence defiant, and Mr. Templemore turned crimson. Dora looked at them quietly. Whatever she might feel, no token of it appeared on her pale face. No wonder, no

anger, no jealous indignation were to be read there.

"I beg your pardon, Richard," she said, with a proud and tranquil smile; "I did not know you were engaged." And, bowing to Mrs. Logan, she passed on. Slowly and leisurely she crossed the long drawing-room leaving it by another door than that through which she had entered. Mr. Templemore could not help looking after her. She might be an adventuress and a schemer, but she would never, if jealous, have betrayed that jealousy by watching her lover; she would never have come to that lost lover's house and humbled her pride so far as to reproach him, or to accuse her more fortunate rival. Yes, she still had, even in her humiliation, that cold charm which reserve and pride give a woman, and which allures man far more than the fondest seduction. Florence felt stung, for she saw that look, and half read it. Dora's sun might be under a cloud just then; but a wife's day is a long one, and in how calm, how cold a voice she had called him "Richard!"

"I beg your pardon!" exclaimed Florence, bitterly; "I came to enlighten you, but find you enlightened. I might have spared myself the trouble of coming; but you see, being silly and foolish as ever, I thought I had but to speak to confound Mrs. Luan and justify myself, even though it was too late."

Mr. Templemore could not help feeling a pity both tender and deep for this beautiful but very foolish creature as she spoke thus. She had no judgment, no pride, no dignity, no generosity even, but she had been shamefully wronged, and it stung him that he, who had once so loved her, should have been made the instrument of that wrong. Dora would never have acted thus. But surely her very folly ought, like a child's, to have made Florence sacred to generous hearts, for how could a creature so frivolous resist even the most transpar

ent artifice, or save herself from perfidy? There was indignation, there was sorrow and emotion in Mr. Templemore's voice as he now said to her:

"Good-by, Florence—God bless you! We are cousins; we have been friends, and we were to have been more. Let not the baseness which parted us so prevail as to break the old tie. You have no brother to protect you, no near relative to befriend you, but remember that you have me."

Mrs. Logan did not answer, but her color deepened, and as she stood with her hand clasped in his, she thought, looking at the floor, "Ah! if Dora were to die—but she is sure to live. Good-by, Miss Moore," she added aloud.

Miss Moore, who had prudently kept her handkerchief to her eyes, sobbed a good-by, which darkened Mr. Templemore's face. How he hated all this! How bitterly he felt his lost privacy! He said not a word to detain Florence. He went down with her and accompanied her to the gate, where a carriage was waiting. She entered it, he saw it drive away, then he walked down the sunburnt, dusty road, brooding over his odious, intolerable wrong. He had been cheated to save John Luan from a poor marriage—also for his money. Such things take place in life daily; Mr. Templemore had often seen them, and looked on with mingled scorn and pity for the victim. And now the case was his. These three women had ensnared him as only women can ensnare man, with the subtle arts which nature has given their sex as the compensation for weakness. Mr. Templemore had a credulous, generous nature, loath to suspect; a nature which made him liable to deceit, and he knew it, and could laugh at it once the first vexation of discovery was over. But he had never thought the deceit would take this aspect, or that the deceiver could wear Dora Courtenay's face. The anguish of that thought overpowered his

fortitude, and conquered even wrath. His whole flesh quivered with the pain, and he stood still, mastered by grief, and unable to go on. When he looked around him, Mr. Templemore found that, led by habit, a more faithful guide than love, his steps had brought him to Mrs. Logan's door.

Again the house was closed and silent. Florence was really gone this time—she was gone, after having made Dora's guilt deeper and plainer. She was gone, and never, unless in some great crisis, must Dora's husband cross that once friendly threshold, or enter those once-loved rooms, now haunted with the spectre of the past. With cold and gloomy eyes he looked at that silent dwelling. If Florence could have seen him then, she would have known it was not her loss that had brought that dark meaning to his face; if she could have read his heart she would have felt more jealous of his grief than she had felt of his brief happiness.

Dora had said it truly—his love for her was man's passion for youth and that beauty which his eyes see in a loved woman; but a noble nature is the alchemy which transmutes the baser metal into pure gold; and Mr. Templemore's love for his young wife could not live on the fleeting charms which had subdued him. He wanted to revere, he wanted to trust; and now that he could do neither, his love felt expiring—but in what throes—in what agonies! He roused himself from that mood, both passionate and bitter—he walked back to Les Roches. He had thought enough over his wrong. It was clear, it was certain, it was irremediable.

"Now I must see my wife," he thought.

His wife! Oh! bitter, insupportable thought! She was his wife. It was the fondest name she had heard from him—the most tender he had found it possible to give her, and now it sounded so dreary, so ominous, so fatal!

CHAPTER XLII.

WHEN Dora left John Luan's room she tried to think, but she could not. She went down to the garden, and walking along one of its gravel paths, she bade herself be calm—and calmness would not come at her bidding. Her misery was so new that she could not believe in it yet—not at least with that settled belief which we give to great and undoubted calamities. It flowed upon her like a torrent, stunning and overwhelming her, ere it carried her away down to the dark deep waters whence there was no returning. For if Mr. Templemore believed her guilty, she could see no escape from her grief—nay, she would accept of none. He could no more detest the profaned tie that would bind them than she would. If love be not reverence and honor, it is nothing to the pure and the proud. But could she have lost his esteem? Was it possible? No, he was staggered and deeply hurt? and perhaps even he could love her no more, so great was his sense of his wrong—but how could he doubt her? It was a sweet and avenging thought, that though no longer adored, she must be honored. Let love be lost—there are many such bitter wrecks in life—but let her innocence be confessed.

"His liking will go back to Florence," thought Dora, and tears rushed to her eyes, and her heart swelled; "but he must do me justice. There will be a great darkness between us—it may last years—but light will return, as morning follows night; and though age should have come and youth fled in the meanwhile, his love shall be welcome were it but for the sake of the two happy weeks he has given me. But he must do me justice—oh! he must!"

She turned back toward the house. She wanted to see him—to speak to him that moment. She felt upon her a flow of proud and tender eloquence—of words that would

come from her heart, and must needs reach his. She asked where he was. In the drawing-room, said Fanny; but she did not add that Florence was with him. The blow fell full upon Dora when she saw these two; and calm though she looked, her heart was bitter to overflowing when she left them. He was with Mrs. Logan! If she could have avoided one enemy, she could not, it seems, escape the other. If her aunt had not spoken, Florence would. She went up to her own room—it was vacant. The sun shone in through the open window, and the breeze fluttered the muslin curtains; but no fond husband sat in the arm-chair waiting for his wife's return! He was below with Mrs. Logan!

"I must dress for dinner," thought Dora with a sigh.

She shook out her long hair, and began combing it slowly. A gleam of sunshine fell on the glowing tresses and turned them into gold, and Dora remembered how one morning, at Deenah, her husband, coming in upon her and finding her thus, had admired that beautiful hair, and lifting it up with a caressing hand, had said it was matchless.

"He loved me then!" thought Dora. "Yes, he loved me then!"

And was all that over? She could not believe it. It is so hard to fall asleep a queen, and waken a beggar. She hoped, but that hope died as the door opened and Mr. Templemore entered the room. With her two hands she parted her long hair, put it back from her face, and looking at him calmly, she said:

"How ill you look, Richard! What ails you?"

She could put the question.

"Something does ail me," he replied, "something which I need not tell you, Dora."

"You have seen Mrs. Logan," she said,

wilfully misunderstanding him, "but I am not jealous."

She said it, and she looked it so thoroughly that he felt strong.

"Mrs. Logan told me nothing I did not know," he said, very coldly.

"And what do you know?" asked Dora, with a proud, sad smile.

"I have no wish to enter on that subject," he replied; "I do not wish to wound, or offend, or even seem to accuse you, Dora."

"Accuse *me*!—of what, Mr. Templemore?"

"Of nothing. I tell you I do not wish it. You are my wife—I do not forget it!"

She clasped her hands and looked at him. Was this her fond, impassioned husband? Was this the man who for two weeks at least had adored her? She was his wife, and he did not forget it. That was the end. She had been the toy, the pleasure of an hour, the sultana of a day, but he was no Eastern despot, he was a Christian gentleman; and there was the law, too, and she was his wife, and he did not forget it.

"God help me!" was all she said, or could say.

He looked at her. He had denied her guilt to Florence; but in his heart he believed it. He believed that she had been her aunt's tacit accomplice, and that she had betrayed him, perhaps for ambition, perhaps for love. Whichever it was, he felt her prey and her victim. It was not in Mr. Templemore's nature to think that, and not resent it. He almost hated her just then, not merely for the fraud which she had abetted, but because she had shaken the very foundation of faith within him. If she was false—who was true? But bitter though his resentment was, he was master of himself now, and he scorned to betray it; the magnanimity of his nature revolted at the thought of crushing that humbled woman, and there was pity in his tone—a pity which stung his wife, as he said—

"Dora, this is a severe trial; let us go through it as wisely as we can—we have a whole lifetime before us. Let us be patient!"

"I would give my life to set you free," she replied in a low tone; "I would give my life, Mr. Templemore, that the last three weeks had never been!"

No other word of deprecation or regret passed her lips. Mr. Templemore saw no signs of genuine sorrow or repentance in his wife; nothing but pride and sin—defiant, though conquered and revealed.

"Dora," he said again, "this is a cruel trial; perhaps we could not pass through it safely if I were to remain here. I do not wish the wrong I have suffered to make me forget the relation in which we stand to each other. Therefore, I shall go away for a time. When I return we shall both have learned to be silent on a subject which must never be mentioned between us."

He spoke very coldly, "When I return!" No gleam of joy shone in his eyes, but dull and heavy remained his look, as the words were uttered. He bore his burden as patiently as he could, but it was a burden, and in his heart he hated it. Again she clasped her despairing hands; she raised her eyes to heaven in wondering appeal at his injustice and her misery.

"I am not jealous," she said, "but there are wrongs beyond endurance, and this is one. You married me two weeks ago, and now my presence is irksome to you, and you go. I am not jealous, but if you had married Florence, would you treat her so?"

"If I had married her," he sternly replied, his cheek flushing with anger, "I should not, at least, have been cheated into it."

Dora felt tried, judged, and condemned, everything which a human being can feel in the way of condemnation, as he said this. Duty would bring him back to her, but love was over. She had no hope to win that back,

but she made a desperate effort to save her honor.

"Mr. Templemore," she said, "your wrong is great; but so is mine. I am a proud woman! Then imagine, if you can, my shame and my humiliation. Your gifts, your caresses, your tenderness can only sting me, now that I know treachery and fraud made them mine. I have said it already; I say it again—I would gladly die to give you back your liberty."

Her pale face was very fine; there was a light in her eyes, and a proud smile on her lips, which went to her husband's very heart. The embers of love were there still, and it would have taken very little—a few caresses, a few fond words—to kindle the old flame anew, and subdue him. But Dora was a proud woman, as she said—one whom suspicion wronged, and she could not do that. Not to secure an eternity of love could she now have thrown her arms around the neck of the man on whom she had been forced, and who so plainly thought her an accomplice in the fraud. Some questions are not questions of will merely, but also of power, and the power to do that was wanting. Her coldness was fatal to her cause. Mr. Templemore could reconcile all she said with guilt, and though the thought of that guilt wrung and tortured him, he could not dismiss it. Had not her aunt declared it?—had not her mother betrayed it?—had not Florence asserted it? and did not his own judgment confirm it? Was it possible that such a plot could be carried on under her eyes for her benefit, and that, though warned from the beginning, she should never suspect it? Oh! that he could believe her to be so simple and so guileless! But he could not, and his agony spoke in the very tones of his voice as he said:

"Oh! Dora, Dora, how could you allow it?—how could you die so to your better self? I had such faith in you! If there was a being whom I respected, it was you; you seemed to

me so pure, so stainless. I could have placed my honor in your keeping, and placed it blindfold. And oh! that you should have come to this! Would to Heaven that all else had perished, and that I stood a ruined and penniless man, with Eva and you, so I still had that innocent wife, whom I looked at sleeping this morning!"

She could not bear this. Her pride melted before the sight of his grief. Looking up to heaven, she said, passionately, "I am innocent!—oh! believe that I am innocent!—only believe that, and love her, if you like. Look at me, Mr. Templemore, and believe that I am innocent."

He looked at her as she asked, but he only read love and despair in her face; he did not see innocence there, but with a deep, sad sigh, he made one desperate effort for belief.

"Dora," he said, "I do not wish to wound or offend you, but tell me this: Is it true that when you came here for the first time, Mrs. Luan promised that you should become my wife?"

Dora felt the blow, but she replied, calmly, "She predicted—she did not promise it."

Her lips quivered as she uttered the words. He pitied her, and made no comment upon them.

"Is it true," he continued, "that when Florence asked you what had taken me to you that night, you refused to reply?"

"It is true," she answered, and she smiled rather proudly.

There was a pause, then he said, gently, "Good-by, Dora."

As he uttered the word, the smile passed from her face, as sunshine passes from the sky. Her eyes darkened in the intensity of their gaze; her lips turned white, and her features grew rigid as stone or death. From head to foot she shook like an aspen-leaf in a strong wind, but she looked bravely in his face. The storm that might rend her asunder should not, at least, conquer her.

"Then you are going?" she said—"on such testimony you condemn me! I am a schemer and a plotter in your eyes—a woman who will do anything to win a husband! Did I ever seek you, Mr. Templemore?—was I forward or alluring?"

"No," he said, with sudden energy. "If ever a girl was free from that vice, you were. If ever I saw modesty in woman, it was in you."

"That much justice you do me," she said, and her lip quivered a little as she spoke; "but perhaps you think me mercenary—perhaps you think that, being a poor girl, I must needs covet being a rich man's wife, Mr. Templemore? Mr. Templemore," she said, the tears rushing to her eyes, and her voice broken by the weeping she could not check, "I know a poor girl who met a poor man, or one who seemed such, and who liked him though he looked a man of broken fortunes. I know a poor girl who thought that, if he liked her too, it would be pleasant to lead a life of toil and poverty with him, and whose heart ached sorely on the day that proved him wealthy. That girl—" She could not go on; she buried her face in her hands, and when she looked up, she was in her husband's arms, and his eyes were dim. "No, you must not kiss me," she said, turning her head away; "I will not be caressed if I cannot be loved, and I will not be loved if I am not honored. I am a proud woman, Mr. Templemore, and I warned you not to take me. I did not want to marry you—it frightened me—I ran away from you, and you followed, and persuaded me, and now I am your wife. If heaven and earth were to tell me that you had broken your honor, would I believe them? Then, as I trust you, so must you trust me—so must you think me incapable of a falsehood, implied or spoken. You must trust me even though every voice should condemn me—do you?"

She turned upon him suddenly, with a flush on her cheek and a light in her eyes, that

made him feel both dazzled and bewitched. He had never loved her more than at that moment. He could not resist her—he felt subdued and won over. With tears and caresses he said he loved her—that he believed in her; in her his wife dear, honored, and beloved.

"And you will not go?" said Dora, smiling through her tears.

Go! he had forgotten all about going—all about doubt and estrangement. He was her lover once more—her fond, enamoured lover, and what could part them? But there are many jealous recesses in a woman's heart. This sudden return of tenderness was not what Dora wanted—for this, perhaps, she had never lost. She gently moved away from Mr. Templemore's side; she put her two hands on his shoulders, and looked up in his face. Never had he seen that piercing glance in her soft bright eyes.

"Mr. Templemore," she said, "give me your word of honor that there is not a doubt left on your mind against me."

Honor! there is something strangely solemn in the word. It is more than a mere appeal to truth, and sacred though that be, it is more than truth. Honor! it is the pure stream from which some of our noblest virtues spring—it is the grace of manhood. It is what neither man nor woman can sully nor taint in vain. We can sin, repent, and be forgiven; but, upon earth, at least, a lost honor can never be restored. Mr. Templemore would have given anything to be able to comply with his wife's request. Some of the words she had spoken had stirred the very depths of his heart. He would have given her anything—done anything to please her but this. And this he could not—he could not. He could not give her his word of honor that no shadow of doubt remained on his mind against her.

"Dora," he said, "is not all this over?"

"Yes," she replied vaguely; "it is."

She had seen and read his troubled face,



"NO, YOU MUST NOT KISS ME."

and she could read, too, the very tones of his voice, so fond, and yet so hesitating.

"Dora," he said, "have pity on me. I believe in you; I know you are innocent and good."

"But you cannot give me your word of honor!" she said.

He took a few turns in the room. He felt dreadfully agitated.

"Have pity on me," he said again, coming back to her. "You would despise me if I could utter the shadow of a lie to please you."

"Yes, I should," she replied calmly. She did not reproach him—she did not even look at him; but Mr. Templemore felt that a wall of ice had risen between him and his wife. He could better forgive the sin than she could forgive the doubt.

He looked at her very moodily.

"I see I must go, after all," he said, bitterly.

"I suppose so," she replied, apathetically.

"I shall soon return," he continued, looking at her; but she did not answer.

And so they must part! These two, who, but a while back, had been clasped in so fond an embrace, must part. One had split on the rock of pride, and the other was lost in shoals of doubt, and the waves of life must, for a time, at least, flow between them. The bond of love was strong still—strong and fervent; but the nobler bond of faith was broken.

"Yes, I must go," he said, desperately; "it is best."

Dora had not believed she could suffer so much. She had been married two weeks—not three—and he left her either because her presence was an infliction he could not bear, or because the conviction of her guilt was one he could not conquer. All wish of justification died within her. She felt turned to stone. He might go, he might stay; not another protest of innocence could now pass her lips.

"Good-by," he said again, and he kissed her; alas! how coldly now, and he left her.

"He will go soon," she thought; and, having locked herself in, she went to the window, and stood there waiting. She looked down the road. How often had she watched for his return when he had no thought of her! She remembered how he and Florence had once entered the house together. She remembered how her laughing face was raised to his, and how their two sunlit figures dazzled her with their brightness. The jealous thrill that shot through her as she looked at them, the flush of pain which rose to her face as she turned away from the sight, and Eva's wondering, "Oh! how red you are, Cousin Dora!" She remembered them every one, and thinking of all she had suffered for the sake of that man, and how she was requited, she passionately wished that she had never been born.

No one came near her. Solitary was her bitter hour. Its keenest pang was soon over. She heard the carriage-wheels grinding on the gravel, she saw it going down the steep road. She sank on her knees and looked at it through blinding tears, and when it had vanished she remained there still weeping, how long she knew not.

When Dora rose, at length, her heart felt changed within her—a bitterness, a resentment were there which even his accusation had not wakened. "Deserted," she thought, "betrayed, wronged, and cast away at the end of two weeks!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

It was thus Mrs. Luan kept her promise of making Dora Mr. Templemore's wife; but her boon had been fatal—like that of the evil spirit in the legend, it had turned into calamity, and only led to the deepest woe. Mr. Templemore was gone; he had left his wife. Whether in doubt or in weariness, in coldness

of heart or in aversion, for howsoever short or how long a time, he had left her. It was best, no doubt, not to pass from such fervid affection to the desolation of coldness and doubt; it was best, but, oh! how dreary!

"And Miss Moore and Eva are gone too, and they have taken away Fido," indignantly exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay.

Dora smiled bitterly. The dog too! And the child had not so much as bid her goodbye. She was an outcast in her husband's house. But she did not complain. She felt wrecked on a shore which no joy could reach, and no murmur passed her lips. It was so useless to repine. "I suppose it is all right, after all," thought Mrs. Courtenay, seeing her so calm; and when they met that evening in the garden, whither Dora had wandered to seek that peace which came not, Mrs. Courtenay's mind was full of another theme.

"Dora," she said, mysteriously, "I met Mrs. Luan here awhile back. What ails her? How came she to leave John?"

"I don't know," apathetically replied Dora. "What should ail her?"

"Why did she creep along that avenue, Dora? And, when she saw me, why did she smile, and look as cunning as a fox?"

Dora put her hand on her mother's arm and looked at her. Each saw what the other meant, and Dora at length said it in covered speech.

"If she be so," she said, "she has been so years."

"But surely—surely," gasped Mrs. Courtenay, "Mr. Templemore would have seen it."

"Has John seen it? I gave him a hint once, and he received it with scorn. No, Mr. Templemore could not see it. She was never the same when he was by—never. Everything was against me—everything."

"But, Dora, what are we to do?" asked Mrs. Courtenay, looking frightened. "What are we to do?"

"Nothing," said Dora.

"I wish Mr. Templemore were here," said Mrs. Courtenay, looking wistfully at her daughter.

Dora could not answer this. Even her mother felt how desolate they were without him—how his presence would have brought security with it, how his absence meant uneasiness and dread.

"The first time he took me in his arms," thought Dora, "I felt, 'Now have I found a refuge against every ill man can inflict, now God's hand alone can reach me here!' That was on our wedding-day—not a month back—and now where is he?—where am I?"

"Dora!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, for Dora's tears were flowing.

"I did not know I was crying," she said, trying to smile. "Do not mind it, mamma."

"I am afraid it is not all right," began Mrs. Courtenay, hesitatingly.

"Hush!" whispered Dora. "Look at aunt!"

She did not see them. She was going down an avenue, peeping first on one side then on the other, evidently seeking something or some one.

"Why has she left John?" asked Mrs. Courtenay.

"I don't know," replied Dora, with a wearied sigh.

At that moment Mrs. Luan turned round and saw them. She immediately came toward them with a cheerful aspect.

"John is so well," she said, "that I have come out for a walk."

Her manner was calm and composed. Dora looked at her, and thought bitterly: "Mad! she is not mad; but she hated me with a deadly hate, for John's sake."

They entered the house together. Dora neither looked at nor spoke to her aunt, and Mrs. Courtenay whispered confidentially, as Mrs. Luan left them to go back to John—

"I dare say she is all right, after all."

The two ladies retired early; but Dora did not retire in order to sleep. She long stood on the balcony of her room, looking at the sky, black and starless, and when she came in she did not go to bed at once. She sat by her toilet-table, undid her hair, and looked at herself in the glass. It already seemed so long ago since the sad face she saw there had had so bright a story. Was this indeed the beggar-maid, the girl with gray eyes, and hair of brown gold, whom King Cophetua loved? Was such a change possible—was it credible? "I know he will come back," thought Dora; "but that is not it. I do not want Mr. Templemore, I want my husband, and something tells me that I shall find him no more. If he could forgive—I cannot. And yet, who knows? If he should come back as he said he would—if sitting thus I were to see the door open—"

She paused in her thoughts. The door was opening—she did not hear it, so softly did it move on its hinges—it was known later that they had been oiled—but a wax light burned on her toilet-table, and its pale gleam reflected in the glass showed her, though dimly, every corner of the vast room. Thus she saw the door open—her heart beat—could it be her husband?—no, it was Mrs. Luan's head she saw in the aperture. A sudden and deadly fear paralyzed Dora. Her heart beat no longer, her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, she was voiceless and motionless. The door continued to open, Mrs. Luan stepped in, but no velvety-footed creature could have made less noise than she did. Swiftly she shut the door behind her, and, as Dora, who had not stirred, saw distinctly, she bolted it. "She has come to murder me!" thought Dora. She did not look round, she did not cry, but as Mrs. Luan slowly crept toward her with the serpentine motion of a feline beast, she suddenly blew out the light, and stepping

round the toilet-table, was out on the balcony in a moment.

A baffled cry of rage burst from the mad woman when she thus suddenly found herself in the darkness of the vast room. She groped about for Dora, shrieking in her frenzy; and Dora, standing on the balcony, never moved, never spoke, never by the slightest motion gave her enemy the least clew to the spot where she stood sheltered by the darkness of the night.

But Mrs. Luan's screams had roused the house. Dora heard exclamations of alarm in the garden, on the staircase, but she also heard her aunt saying, "I shall get you!—I shall get you!—you are out on the balcony!—I shall get you!"

She heard her groping near the toilet-table—within a few paces of her—she felt the window move, and still she had self-command enough to keep in the wild scream of terror which nearly passed her lips. Meanwhile the sounds of help came nearer, they gathered round her door, it was tried, shaken violently, then burst open. Mrs. Courtenay and the servants rushed in, and with them came a flood of light. Pale as death, but still calm, Dora stepped out from her hiding-place, and standing with the crimson window-curtains behind her, she said, pointing to Mrs. Luan, who crouched and cowered in a corner of the room, "She has gone mad!—take care!—she wanted to murder me!"

There was a pause of wonder, of fear, and doubt; then the men approached the mad woman. The struggle was violent, but brief and silent. Neither Mrs. Luan nor the men who tried to master her uttered one word. In a few moments they had succeeded, and Mrs. Luan, firmly bound, sat silent and sullen in Dora's chair. Dora stood and looked at her, and as she looked, she could hear John laughing up-stairs. That fierce, wild creature, as dangerous as a wild beast, and as fell in its

instincts, was the mother who had borne John Luan, reared him, and loved him with such passionate tenderness, that it had helped to make her what Dora saw. As she stood thus gazing at her moody aunt, with the dishevelled hair falling around her sullen face, Mrs. Templemore heard a voice near her saying, "Please, ma'am, here is a letter Mr. Templemore left for you. Jacques was to give it, but forgot it."

Dora started, and waking from her dream, she saw Fanny. With a trembling hand she took her husband's letter and broke the seal. A bundle of silk notes fell out, and fluttered on the floor; but Dora did not heed them. With feverish eagerness she read the first letter Mr. Templemore had written to her since their marriage. It was brief, cold, but strictly courteous. Mr. Templemore placed a large sum at his wife's disposal, and informed her that he should expect to find her alone on his return to Les Roches. Dora turned very pale. Money and her mother's banishment!—this was her sentence. He had gone to seek his pleasure, and place his child in safety, and he had left her at the mercy of whatever sorrow or evil chance might come in his absence. Was this what he had promised on their wedding-day? Fanny had picked up the notes, and she handed them to her mistress, but even as she put them back in the envelope Dora felt that her resolve was taken. "I will die before I eat his bread or live on his money," she thought.

Mrs. Luan now spoke for the first time.

"I have made a lady of you," she said—"I have made a lady of you, Dora."

"You have," answered her niece, looking at the madwoman with a passion of grief she could not control—"you have, and I know the cost."

Even as she said it, John laughed again in his room. He, too, had paid the price of Dora's elevation to the rank of Mr. Templemore's wife.

"Oh! Dora, Dora," pitifully exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, "what does it all mean?"

Dora looked at her and smiled—oh! how sadly!—how drearily!

CHAPTER XLIV.

WE may decree a thing in the first bitterness of our resentment, and Providence may so far favor us that we shall not be able to fulfil our angry desire; but it was not so with Mr. Templemore's wife. The day after he had left Les Roches, Dora received a letter from Mr. Ryan enclosing a check for fifty pounds. The shares of the Redmore Mines had turned from so much waste paper to gold, and Mr. Ryan, in the exuberance of his joy, wrote to Miss Courtenay, advancing a sum which he considered that she might need. That she had left Les Roches, and gone back to Madame Bertrand's he knew, but happiness is selfish, and Dora had forgotten to tell him of her marriage.

"People should send cards," very sensibly remarked Mrs. Courtenay.

She said this by John's sick-bed, where a nurse had now taken Mrs. Luan's place. The young man's case had been pronounced desperate, and for his sake Dora had resolved to wait till all was over. But neither was that to be. The peril which had cost her so dear passed away. John's life hung on a thread for a few days, then youth and strength prevailed, and he came back to life, and, alas! too, to grief. He bore his sorrow manfully, but the place where he had suffered so terribly was hateful to him. He would not wait till his recovery was final to leave Les Roches, and Dora did not detain him. The sooner all was over the better it would be.

Mrs. Courtenay had been very unwell since the terrible evening on which her sister-in-law's insanity had broken out, and Dora went

no farther than the gate of Les Roches with her cousin. There they parted. He was going to resume a life of labor shorn of every hope which had once made it dear, and he looked at her in sad silence.

Mrs. Courtenay's querulous complaints that Mr. Templemore did not write, had told John a sad story, which Dora's pale face now completed. He knew nothing of the circumstances which had attended her marriage, nothing of the causes which had estranged her husband, nor of his own connection with her grief; but that grief he saw, and when she stood so wan and languid before him, he looked at her with sullen and jealous sorrow. Who was that cold husband, that Dora should love him thus? What right had that stranger, that man whom she had detested years, the successful rival who had laid Paul Courtenay in his grave, thus to go robbing other men, snatching the sweet prizes of life from them—then casting them away so ruthlessly? For a moment John Luan was his mother's son; if a thought, a wish of his could have annihilated Mr. Templemore, Dora's husband would have ceased to exist. What! had he lost her for this? Was the girl whom he had loved years, about whom he had dreamed so fondly, whose loss had brought him to death's door, was she to be treated like a cast-off mistress by the man who had deprived him of all joy? "If I could kill him I would!" thought John Luan, setting his teeth. Yes, he would gladly have murdered Mr. Templemore just then, and, of course, have married his widow.

It is well that a man's feelings are not always spoken; it is well, too, that the thoughts and wishes which enter his heart when he has left the door open to the tempting devil who comes to all in such evil hours—it is well, we say, that these abide not, unless with the dangerous and the bad. John Luan was neither. But neither was he very good, for

good-nature is not goodness. He could be sullen and revengeful when he thought himself wronged, and from that hour he hated Mr. Templemore, whom he had not loved before.

Something of this Dora saw, for she thought: "Yes, John, the living husband has avenged the dead brother on the faithless sister;" but all she said, as she looked down the road was—

"I envy you—I envy you, John Luan. Your cares are heavy, your sorrows are cruel, and you are alone, and yet I envy you. You can go forth and strive. You can go forth and conquer, perhaps."

"Conquer what?" he asked, moodily.

"What you need, John—forgetfulness."

With what passionate longing she looked down that white road which wound away to the busy city below! If it had led to that ancient world of the poets, that world where Lethe flowed, her gaze could scarcely have been less intent and yearning than it was. It could scarcely have taken less heed than it did of him. He saw and felt it.

"I must go," he said, a little hurriedly. "Good-by, Dora."

"Good-by," she replied, listlessly.

She gave him her cold hand. He might go, he might stay—John felt it changed nothing in her life. He walked down the road, followed by the servant who carried the carpet-bag, and he never looked back. Yet Dora long watched him. Even when he was out of sight she stood there, envying him. He might go away and strive, as she had said, and forget. "If I could but forget," she thought, as she at length turned away. "Oh! if I but could!" Her heart beat—her whole being trembled. "Forget!" she thought. "O God, forbid that I should ever forget!"

And she was right. There is something both passionate and sweet in the memory of lost happiness. It is one of the few sorrows to which we cling. Proserpina never forgot, we

are told, the flowers which she was gathering in the plains of Enna, when the dark king bore her away. If he had taken her to Olympus itself, and not to Hades, she could not have forgotten them. Never again should there have been such perfumed violets and anemones so fair. Goddess though she was, and immortal, she, too, had a youth, and looked back with vain yearning to its golden gates closed forever. Time could not wither, age could not fade her beauty, but something there had been for her, something which there could be no more. But to remember is not to forgive, unfortunately, and though there was a smile on Dora's lips when she went back to her mother, there was also a settled resolve in her heart. She found Mrs. Courtenay much depressed.

"I cannot get over it," she said plaintively, in answer to her daughter's question. "Poor Mrs. Luan! I miss her so, Dora. And then Mr. Templemore stays away so long."

Dora did not answer at once. She sat with her look fixed moodily on empty space. The walls with their pictures, the brown and grave furniture of her mother's room, the window and the landscape it framed, had vanished from her view. She saw a sea-beaten shore, a rocky coast, a low village straggling along the beach, and there she made a refuge and a home, far away from Mr. Templemore's house and his money.

"Mamma," she said suddenly, looking up at her mother, "you want a change, and you must take one."

"Of course I want a change," said Mrs. Courtenay, a little peevishly; "and if, instead of running away, Mr. Templemore had stayed here, he could have taken us somewhere."

Never was unconsciousness of the offence of her presence more complete than Mrs. Courtenay's.

"Mr. Templemore is enjoying himself in London, I dare say," replied Dora; "and Lon-

don would not do for us, mamma. You want rest and quietness, after the shock you have had. Why should we not go to Ireland?"

"My dear!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, much startled, "what would your husband say to that?"

"Why should he say anything?" composedly replied Dora; "I have no reason to believe that he misses me just now. He will come and look for me when he wants me, mamma."

She spoke so calmly, with so little appearance of resentment, that her mother was deceived. She did not, indeed, yield an immediate assent to Dora's proposal; she hesitated and demurred, but Dora's quiet arguments conquered her resistance in the end. Little by little she gave way, and finally she saw nothing that was not right or feasible about this expedition to the Irish coast.

"A child could cheat her," thought Dora, looking at her guileless little mother with tears in her eyes; "and it is this innocent being—my mother, too, for whom there is no room in Les Roches! It is she whom Mr. Templemore could believe an accomplice in a base plan to rob him of his liberty. If his heart had not already been turned from me, would my poor mad aunt's story have prevailed against us?"

It is dangerous to sting a woman's pride, and most dangerous of all when she loves. Indifference is a wonderful peacemaker, and there are few wounds it will not heal. Dora longed, though perhaps she did not know it, to pay Mr. Templemore back in coin, and to show him that she, too, could live without him. And yet she prepared but slowly for their departure, and lingered over the task; perhaps she had a secret hidden hope that her husband would return suddenly, and prevent her flight, but he did not. Slow though Dora was, everything was soon ready, and she said gayly to her mother one evening:

"We go by the first train, and I am so glad; the change will do us a world of good."

"I hope so," answered Mrs. Courtenay, rather languidly.

"I am sure of it," said Dora, still cheerful; and she went out for a lonely walk, but looking "as bright as sunshine," thought Mrs. Courtenay. The evening was fair and still. A dewy freshness was falling on the garden. Never, it seemed to Dora, had its flowers sent forth a fragrance so penetrating. She bent to gather some, then turned away, leaving them on their stems. "Stay here," she thought—"stay and blow and wither here. If I leave this place, what have I to do with you?"

She entered the shady grounds. How cool, how fresh, how mysterious they looked—but how sad, too, was their loneliness! In these alleys Eva's loud, joyous laugh had rung. On that old bench Mr. Templemore and Florence had sat and talked of love. Dora stood before it, looking at it as moodily as if it were an altar on which her youth had been laid and sacrificed by some pitiless Calchas.

"Why did I ever come between them?" she thought; "why did he ever seek me? The sordid cares of life would have saved me from love. I dare say I would have married John Luan in the end—out of very weariness, as so many girls do marry. And I would have read novels, and wondered at that happy love-match one reads of so much and sees so seldom, and my life would have been as a quiet dream. And now it is all woe and bitterness. I am as a usurper who cannot abdicate. I cannot set him free—and he cannot love me. For a few days he was bewitched; something was on him which looked like love, but was not it; and now that something has left me, and his heart has gone back to her. And I must either see it and suffer agonies, or leave him, as I do—and suffer still. Never again can I be happy—never, and I am not twenty-five!

Paul—Paul—my brother, why did I forget you!"

She sank on her knees on the damp earth, and laid her fevered cheek on the stone bench. She could not weep, but she let the flood of bitter thought rise and overwhelm her; and when remembrance returned, and she left the past and its dead for the present and the living, she was shivering, and the chillness of the spot and the hour seemed to have reached her very heart. She went back to the house and entered it, but she did not go to her mother's apartment. She took a light and went over every room that had once been dear and familiar to her. "After all, I could stay," she thought, "and he would come back. I could stay, but I will not; and when he returns, he shall find that solitude he went so far to seek. No more need he leave his home to shun me."

Dora was standing in the school-room as she came to this bitter conclusion. Eva's globes, her books, her piano were there, and Dora's own chair by the window. Some pleasant and some severe visions haunted this apartment. She had been very happy here, but here too she had suffered keenly. Well, both that joy and that sorrow were over now. She had entered a dull, cold world, where neither abided, where all was shade and endurance. "I will write to him here," thought Dora. She sat down, and taking up the pen which had so often corrected Eva's exercises, and lay there unused, she wrote to Eva's father. She did not complain, she did not reproach, but she refused to accept the fate he laid upon her. It was a proud, cold letter, but it was also, though Dora did not think so, the letter of a woman who still loved the husband whose house she was leaving. It lay before her, and leaning back in her chair, she looked at it, thinking: "This is my first letter to him. I wonder what love-letters are like, and how they feel who write or read them?" She wondered too

how he would feel when this letter was placed in his hands. Would he seek and follow her, fond and repentant? Would he come and claim his wife, angry and authoritative, or would he simply leave her in scornful silence? "I could burn it and stay," she thought; "nothing compels me to go—nothing. It is time yet, and to-morrow it will be too late." But what avails time when we will not take that inestimable boon? Nine times out of ten that Fate, of whom we speak with mysterious dread, lies in our hand, and is the servant of our own will. "He left me," thought Dora; "days and weeks have passed, and he has not written, not made a sign—I do not know where he is—I do not even know the abode of his child. His last act was to signify my mother's exile, and to give me money."

She rose as this stinging thought came to her, she went up to her room, she took out the bank-notes from her desk; she enclosed them with her letter, sealed the packet, then rang for Fanny.

"We leave early to-morrow morning," she said, trying to speak calmly; "Mr. Templemore will soon return. It is not worth while sending this by post—you will give it to him when he comes back, Fanny."

The girl held out her hand, and mechanically Dora gave her the packet; but, after a few moments' pause, she took it back, and put it in the drawer. "You will find it there to-morrow," she said.

"Very well, ma'am," replied Fanny. She looked as unconscious as she well could look, but she had felt the soft, limp notes through the envelope, and she knew the meaning of Dora's journey.

"He may follow me if he chooses," thought Dora; "but never unless he seeks for me shall I enter the house where he left me after we had been married a fortnight. The sin, if sin there be, lies with him, and not with me."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE long sleepless night was over. A dull gray light told of coming dawn when Dora rose and dressed. It was too early, and she knew it, but she was wearied of her own restlessness, and it seemed as if motion alone would calm the fever within her. Besides, she wanted to go to Rouen before leaving Les Roches with her mother.

The porter at the lodge was taking what he called his morning nap when the voice of his young mistress unexpectedly roused him by requesting the iron gate to be opened. The porter's conclusion was that he was dreaming, and that this was not his morning nap but his mid-night sleep, and he made no attempt to stir; but Dora's voice rose higher, and by knocking at his door she convinced the porter that he was not asleep and dreaming, but that Mr. Templemore's wife wanted to leave Les Roches. So he rose wondering, and let her out, and looked after her as she glided down the gray road where the light of morning was gradually stealing, wakening the tall trees from their long, calm sleep, and giving a token to the closed daisies in the dewy grass that the sun was coming fast.

Swiftly, and with a sort of longing, Dora went on till she reached her old home and Madame Bertrand's house. Madame Bertrand was in the act of opening her shutters, and she still wore the cotton handkerchief around her head, preliminary to the donning of the close white cap by which it was to be succeeded. She smiled brightly and nodded cheerfully on seeing Dora.

"Good-morning, mademoiselle—madame, I mean," she added, correcting herself, "for I have been told you are madame now, the wife of Doctor Richard."

Dora stood like one transfixed. The wife of Doctor Richard! How much happiness had

once seemed comprised in these words; and now what was their meaning?

"Will you not come in?" asked Madame Bertrand, still bright and cheerful; and as Dora nodded consent, she came and opened the door to her with a look that had a world of knowing and shrewd congratulation in it. Dora soon recovered herself, and tried to look like a happy bride.

"I have come to bid you good-by, Madame Bertrand," she said; "we are leaving Les Roches, and as I do not know when we shall return, I would not go without seeing you once more."

Madame Bertrand was very grateful, and made a few inquiries which showed that she concluded Mr. Templemore to be bent on the same journey with his wife. Dora did not undeceive her, there was no need to do so, but, after a brief pause, she said:

"I see your rooms are not let. Will you let me see them again? I always intended drawing the view from my room window, but I never did; I fancy that if I look at it now I can make a sketch of it."

Madame Bertrand felt delighted and flattered at the request. She always had said the view from mademoiselle's room was a pretty view, but a Parisian family who had looked at the apartment yesterday had declared it was *triste*, and enough to give one the spleen, and had gone to live near the Rue de l'Impératrice, which was so glaring that it was enough to dazzle one's eyes out, in Madame Bertrand's opinion.

Thus she chattered as she went up-stairs with Dora, but luckily she did not stay. The baker and the milkman summoned her below. Her sabots clattered down the staircase, and Dora was alone in her old room. Madame Bertrand had opened the window; the sun was up now, the outlines of the gray old church were cut on a blue sky, and though its body was still in shadow, the flowers that

grew in the buttresses stirred gently in the little wind that came from the river, and had an air of young, bright morning life about them. How gay they looked on that carved stony background, from which centuries had taken away its first hardness, giving instead a tender though massive grace! How pure and transparent was the green of the vine-leaves through which the fresh morning breeze was playing, as if to toy thus with Nature's beautiful things were the end of its being, and how everything she saw seemed, to Dora to be telling her again the story of her lost happiness! She stood and looked with a beating heart. Her hand was idle, no pencil traced that view on paper, and yet she was drawing it all the time—drawing it in outlines which man's hand could never efface, in colors which time could not fade, on a poor, frail mortal tablet, indeed, but one which would last as long as her own being.

"Doctor Richard's wife," she thought, turning away as she remembered how she had sat waiting, watching and dreaming too, by that window. "Yes, thus it might have been well; but I am like you, Grisélidis, I too have been taken from low estate, and I too must pay the cost, for the full price is not told yet; but oh! how bitter these first instalments have been!" She lowered her veil and went down-stairs hastily.

"Good-by, Madame Bertrand," she said—"good-by. God bless you!"

Madame Bertrand looked for the drawing; she uttered an exclamation. She wanted to see it, also to send her respectful compliments to Madame Courtenay, but Dora was gone. Swiftly though she went away, however, Madame Bertrand had seen tears glistening on her cheeks through her veil.

"The dear young creature!" she said, when mentioning the fact of Dora's visit to one of her gossips. "She was so affected at parting from me, that she wept. But all my lodg-

ers doted on me, excepting Monsieur Theodore."

Another errand, besides the wish of seeing Madame Bertrand, once more had brought Dora to Rouen; but this was soon fulfilled, and Mrs. Courtenay had only finished dressing when her daughter entered her room.

"My dear, where have you been?" said Mrs. Courtenay. "Fanny told me you were out—I got quite uneasy."

"I went to order a carriage," replied Dora, calmly; then, seeing her mother's amazed look, she added: "you know how particular Mr. Templemore is about his horses. I cannot say what the coachman would do, once he had put us down at the station."

Mrs. Courtenay supposed her daughter was right, but it was plain that, as the hour for leaving Les Roches drew nigh, she felt bewildered and perplexed. Dora looked very cheerful, though she also looked very white. She was lively and talkative, but she ate no breakfast; yet Mrs. Courtenay was lulled to sleep, and she innocently said, as she looked out at the garden from the breakfast-table:

"I like going, because I like a change; but do you know, Dora, I shall also like coming back to Les Roches? It looks so bright and gay this morning."

A strange expression passed across Dora's pale face, but she sat with her back to the light, and Mrs. Courtenay's sight was not very good, so the meaning, which a person of keener mental and physical vision than she was might have read there, escaped her. Jacques came, with the intimation that the carriage had arrived, breakfast was over, and it was time to go. Dora went up to her room to put on her bonnet, also to give the letter, which had lain in the drawer all night, into Fanny's hand. The girl noticed how cold and pale her mistress looked, also how her little, nervous hand shook; but well-bred servants have eyes, and see not, and nothing in her

pretty, stolid face betrayed that she had guessed Mrs. Templemore's secret.

This was the end of the long, bitter struggle. It expired with the last pang. What remained to be gone through was mere mechanical endurance. Dora went down to her mother; they entered the carriage, it wheeled round the gravel path, passed through the gates, then went down the road at a rapid pace. The trees, the hedges, the villas on either side rushed past them. Children in gardens, servants at bedroom windows, were seen, then vanished. The cool streets of Rouen were entered. Sunshine stole down the roofs of houses, lit up dark alleys, and poured in full broad radiance on church fronts, rich with carving.

"That is Saint Ouen," said Mrs. Courtenay, looking out of the carriage window. But Dora leaned back and closed her eyes. She would not see the entrance to the Gallery. She had gone through sufficient bitterness that morning, and needed no more.

The rest was nothing. It was merely getting into a railway carriage, and being conveyed through a green landscape, which Dora's eyes saw not, whilst Mrs. Courtenay made pretty childish remarks, or uttered little screams of wonder, which her daughter did not hear. Both speech and exclamations ceased rather suddenly, and Dora did not miss them. She was again going through that meeting in the parlor at Kensington, when, reading sudden and unexpected love in Mr. Templemore's eyes, she had placed her hand in his. Had she been all deceived, then? Surely he had cheated himself before he had thus convinced her, and led to their mutual loss and betrayal. But even if it had been so—even if he had loved her for a few hours—what mattered it now? Was not every second of time separating them, and had she not herself done it, and did she repent it?

Dora roused herself, and compressed her

lips, and kept in the quick, troubled breath that would come with that vain yearning toward a broken past. The tame, commonplace parlor, the trees, the gray twilight, all faded away, and the bright green landscape, and the railway carriage, and her mother's presence came back. Suddenly she uttered a sort of cry.

"Mamma! mamma!" she said, seizing Mrs. Courtenay's hand, "what is it?—what ails you?"

"I—I am not very well," faintly said Mrs. Courtenay.

The change in her countenance was so striking and ominous, that a cold terror struck on Dora's heart. This was no trifling ailment, no passing weakness or fainting-fit.

"Mamma," she cried, her voice rising with sudden anguish, "mamma, do tell me what ails you?"

"I—I don't know," stammered Mrs. Courtenay. "I felt very strange all night—but I thought it would go."

She leaned her forehead on her hand and seemed unable to say more. They were alone in the carriage.

"We shall alight at the next station," said Dora.

Mrs. Courtenay did not answer. Her countenance was vacant, and the hand which Dora held was cold and clammy. How drearily slow felt the motion of the train, yet it soon slackened its speed and stopped at a branch station. The line here passed through a green park, at the end of which Dora could see the closed windows of an old château; no other dwelling was visible, yet Dora remembered the place at once. She alighted, put a few questions, and learned that they were, as she thought, within a quarter of a mile of that village inn where they had once dined with Mr. Templemore. Mrs. Courtenay was helped down, and a messenger was dispatched to the "White Horse" for a vehicle; it came, after a brief delay. Mrs. Courtenay was lifted up into it, and they drove

slowly through a green, happy landscape, that made Dora's heart ache. Yet her mother was no worse when they reached the "White Horse." She even said she felt better.

"The doctor is waiting," said the landlady, coming out to receive them.

Nothing was changed about the old place, and this homely woman's face was not altered. Time had told her no sad story, her bright blue eyes and ruddy cheeks spoke of unbroken content and steadfast cheerfulness. That gulf which existed between Mr. Templemore's wife and her lost happiness had all been smooth level ground to her. Small cares and daily tasks had filled those days which Dora had found so dreary and so eventful. But she had no time to linger over these thoughts; her mother was conveyed to the best room of the house—she remembered it too—and there they found Doctor Gentil, a brown old man, a real village doctor, rather rough of aspect, but kindly in manner. He put a few questions to Mrs. Courtenay, wrote a prescription, and left, saying he would call in the afternoon. Dora followed him out.

"Is it a serious case?" she asked, in a low tone.

He read her face. It was pale but brave.

"Very serious," he replied, gravely, "but not hopeless."

"Not hopeless!" The words seemed to stun Dora; but she rallied at once, and returned to her mother with a smiling face.

"We shall have to stay here a few days," she said.

"I suppose so," vacantly replied Mrs. Courtenay. "Yet I feel better—only so strange, quite stupid."

Dora looked at her silently. She had never before seen Mrs. Courtenay with that pinched face and those sunken eyes.

"I do believe I could not make out a patience," resumed Mrs. Courtenay; then she added, with sudden liveliness: "Did you bring the cards?"

"If I did not we can buy some, mamma."

"Buy!—why buy? Why not use our own?"

But she could not follow out this train of thought. It proved too much for her, and she shook her head rather drearily. "It is no use," she said. "I am getting stupid."

In the afternoon Doctor Gentil came again. He found Mrs. Courtenay neither better nor worse, and still he said, "It was a serious case, but not hopeless." Two wearisome, anxious days passed thus. On the third Mrs. Courtenay was slightly better, but also very restless, and toward evening she insisted that her daughter should go out. Dora resisted, then yielded to please her.

"You want fresh air, you know," said her mother, "and that good old soul, the landlady, will stay with me. You know I like old people."

Dora went, but her heart still felt heavy and sad as she walked up a green, winding path that led to the church. Her mother was not out of danger, and she feared the worst. It seemed as if some terrible doom weighed upon her, and as if every step she took in life only helped to work out its fulfilment. The strong wind of calamity, division, and impending death was sweeping everything and every one from her side. A little more, and she would stand alone, with the great desert of life around her.

It might have been better for Dora's nature if her lot had not been so hard a one just then. We are not always the wiser for sorrow, for we do not always know how to receive that severe chastener, grief; and there was too much resentment, not against Providence, but against one of its human instruments, in the heart of Mr. Templemore's wife. She could not forgive her husband. He had left her for a few days only, but these had been calamitous as years, and by giving her no clue to his whereabouts, he had signified very plainly that he wanted to forget as well as to leave his wife. "Be it so," she thought, "it is his act, not mine—the sep-

aration, the forgetfulness, shall be as deep as ever he can have wished them to be."

She was walking with her eyes bent as she thought thus. She looked up as the path widened. The village was far behind her, and before her stood the little gray church, with its churchyard around it. "I have been here once before," thought Dora, with a pang, "and shall I soon come here again?" Yet she could not resist the bitter temptation of surveying the spot that might soon be her mother's last home. A few graves were scattered within the narrow space which a low wall enclosed around the ancient edifice. Through the open door Dora could see the altar, and above it a richly-painted glass window. Purple hues, with bright streaks of ruby and emerald, fell on the white altar-cloth, and on the cold stone floor. But not a soul was visible. No old woman had gone in to say her prayers; no lingering urchin had strayed in to loiter away time. Equally silent and lonely was the little churchyard. Tall trees rose everywhere around it, making a background of green gloom, and shutting out from the dead the friendly aspect of human dwellings. But to Dora, in that dark hour, it seemed well that it should be so. Such a mound of red earth as that of a new-made grave, which her eye fell upon, might soon hold, if not all that had been dear, all at least that now faithfully loved her. "One in Glasnevin and one here," she thought. "Oh! if I could but go down there with you, my poor darling—if when he comes back, he could but learn that mother and child are lying in the same cold bed, he would be free at last—free and happy, who can doubt it?"

She could not weep, she could not pray—there are thoughts too bitter for tears, feelings too earthly to soar on the strong wing of prayer. She could only stand there looking at that grave, and brooding over a blank future. For a blank it must be. "Never, if I leave

her here," thought Dora, "never shall he find me. I will vanish from his life, as she will have vanished from this earth. I will beg my bread, I will toil like a hireling before I go back to his house and live on his money."

Suddenly a keen, remorseful thought smote on this resentful mood. What was she doing here, brooding over irreparable wrongs, when her mother might be dying? Eagerly, swiftly she retraced her steps. She hurried down the path, through the village, and she was breathless when she reached her mother's room. On seeing her, the landlady rose, and, looking mysterious, made a sign. Dora followed her out. With many needless words the good woman informed Dora that an English lady, young and richly-dressed, had come to the inn in consequence of an accident on the line, but that on learning Mrs. Courtenay's presence and illness, she had looked alarmed and left hastily.

"She thought it was some contagious disease," said Dora.

"No, no, mademoiselle. I am sure she knew you," shrewdly answered the landlady; "I saw it in her face."

"You are mistaken," sadly said Dora; "no one knows me." And she went back to her mother.

"I am glad you came back," said Mrs. Courtenay; "I want to sleep, and I did not like to do so while you were away. Of course the poor old thing is honest; but having all that money—"

"What money, mamma?"

"All those notes Mr. Templemore sent you."

Dora said nothing. Where was the use of enlightening and troubling her?

"And so I am glad you came back," resumed Mrs. Courtenay, "for I am very sleepy."

Dora smoothed her mother's pillow. Mrs. Courtenay's head sank back upon it with a

luxurious sigh, and, saying languidly, "Oh! what a sweet sleep I am going to have!" she closed her eyes and fell into a deep, calm slumber.

Dora looked at her in a sort of dream. Forth from the recesses of memory there came to her an Eastern saying which Doctor Richard had once told her—"It is better to sit than to stand; it is better to lie than to sit; and better to be dead than lying."

A fatalist first said this; and yet how it answers to a feeling within us—to a weariness, a languor, and craving for repose, which nothing mortal can content, and which goes forth to meet that something more than mortal, of which death holds the keys!

"My poor little mother!" thought Dora, looking at her with dim eyes and quivering lips. "She is so innocent, so guileless, so childish, that if she were to pass away thus from life like a sleeping baby, I could feel no uneasiness, no fear—no more than if she were a child indeed. And for her it would be well, but oh! for me—for me!"

She could not bear the thought. She rose and went to the window and stood there. The summer beauty of the day was gone. Sullen clouds were gathering in the sky. A south-westerly wind bent the summits of a few tall trees that rose above the village. Dora knew them by the church spire which rose amongst them—these were the trees that overlooked the churchyard. The inn was very quiet; the village, indeed, looked lonely and almost deserted. There was a great fair in the neighborhood, and the men and women had gone to it. A few old people and young children alone had remained behind. One house facing the inn attracted her attention by a group at the door. An old man and two children stood looking up the road. Presently the elder of the boys ran toward a man and a woman who walked slowly. They were heavily laden, and the woman looked footsore; but

she put her hand in her pocket and drew out something which the boy flourished aloft like a prize till his brother came jealously forward to claim his share. Then they all mingled and entered the house together; and presently a bright fire sprang from the kitchen hearth; and through the open window Dora saw them all on the vivid background, and as she looked a feeling of great desolation fell upon her heart. She thought of her husband, of Eva, of the home she had left, of her mother, who might die in a village inn, and be buried with unknown dead in a village churchyard—and the bright, happy picture before her was lost in tears.

The clouds broke into rain—soft summer rain, that would renew the drooping aspect of nature, and give it a more brilliant beauty; but the tears which Dora shed, as she thought over the bitterness of her lot, brought no relief to her full heart. For her there seemed no bright, no happy morrow in store—no renewal of love and joy. Nothing but a long, sad darkness, deep and melancholy as that of the coming night.

CHAPTER XLVI.

It might have softened the bitterness at Dora's heart, if she had known how keen an agony it was for her husband to doubt her, and leave her with that doubt upon him. He had told her, and told her truly, that the loss of Florence had been to him as the lopping of a limb; but to lose his wife thus was like death itself. Life and health do not perish because of the pangs of amputation, and Mr. Templemore, once the surgeon's knife had gone through him, had felt a sound and living man again. He would not, indeed, have chosen such a time to love and marry; but marriage having seemed compulsory to him, he had neither wished nor sought to avoid love. And love had come to him delightful

and engrossing as a second spring. Dora had gifts which he had always appreciated, but which he prized keenly and very fondly when they became his. He liked her bright youthful aspect, her warm heart, her joyous laugh, and her fine clear mind. He admired her, he was tenderly proud of her, and he loved her with a passion as sudden as it was engrossing. She was his wife—his dear wife, linked to him by ties sweet, sacred, and indissoluble—linked to him for years, for life, and with no parting possible but the bitter inevitable parting of the grave.

And now this fervid dream was over. Love, honor, admiration were dead. It was over, and he left her stung and mortified with his wrong, ashamed and humbled at his mistake, and even at the gleam of passion which had survived it, and nearly betrayed him anew, and again made him her slave. He left her, angrily feeling that he must return to her some day—yes, this guilty wife, whom he had thought to go on loving less passionately, perhaps, as time passed, and youth fled, but not less truly, held him fast, and he must return to her. He was thrown on a lifelong companionship, from which the soul of love had departed. Bitterness and indignation availed him nothing; he was Dora Courtenay's husband.

Passion is like a stormy sea. It has waves that rise high or fall back as with the breath of the tempest. If Dora had but known it, there had been a moment when, innocent or guilty, she had prevailed—when a word, a look, a caress, would have kept Mr. Templemore forever. But she had let him depart, and when the door of her room closed between them, his longing for faith, her charm, and her power, had all vanished alike. She had allowed those full waters to go back to their fountain-head, and the doubt and anger, allayed awhile by the seduction of her presence, to rise anew when she was seen no

more. She had allowed Mr. Templemore to remember that a fraud had made him her husband, to believe that she had looked on and accepted all passively, the sin and its reward, and the higher had been the tide that bore him to her, the stronger was the receding power of that which now carried both love and him away from Dora.

To give and to receive is one of the strongest of human ties, and perhaps because man and woman can never give or receive more than in the marriage state, is that link held so sacred, and felt to be so potent. The more is given, and the dearer grows the bond; but woe to the day when the once generous supply is stinted—when the heart has no more to bestow, and feels no joy in receiving. That sad day now seemed to have come for Mr. Templemore.

“Never, never can I love her again?” he thought, as he leaned back in the railway carriage that took him on to Paris, after he had left Miss Moore and Eva at St. Germain. “And yet I must go back to her, or take on myself the frightful responsibility of utterly forsaking a young and attractive woman, who has not been my wife three weeks.”

The alternative sickened him. If he left her to her fate, might she not, in the bitterness of her heart, turn desperate, and give him cause to rue his abandonment? Mr. Templemore was not of a jealous nature, and he did not even then doubt his wife’s virtue; but he remembered that John Luan loved her, and that Dora never forgot a wrong. His conscience and his pride alike told him that he must return to her if he wished to avoid for both the risk of ruin and shame. Yes, he must go back, and though he had never contemplated not doing so, the necessity galled him. He must go back to the woman who had entrapped him, and who had now a legal right to his name, his home, and his love. The thought chafed him, and added its irritation to the despair of that dark hour.

Two ladies—well-dressed women—were Mr. Templemore’s travelling companions. He had not seen them at first, but now he became conscious of their presence. They were young and pleasant-looking. They were cheerful, too, and seeing him so gloomy and absorbed, they talked pretty much as if he were not there. The younger one of the two took off her gloves. He saw her rings flash on her slender fingers; the scent from her little perfumed handkerchief was that which Dora used; the rustling of her silk dress reminded him of the pleasure with which he used to hear his wife move about the house at Deenah. Something in her attitude, as she looked out on the green landscape, made him remember with a sharp pang his happy wedding-day, and Dora’s radiant face as they journeyed together, and Mr. Templemore felt the happiest of bridegrooms. And now, what was left to him of all the dreams he had that day indulged in? The graceful, elegant woman whom he had wedded was his still—the woman who had a charming figure, a pretty hand, fine eyes, and hair of a beautiful color—yes, she was his till death should them part, and long after those fleeting charms should have faded she would still be his. But that other dearer woman, the companion and friend—she who had already made him feel that there is a tie stronger than blood, more potent than the affection of habit, sympathy in some of the noble things for which God gave man life—she was gone—she was lost; and seek for her long as he would, he could find her no more.

Oh! if he could have believed her to be guiltless! If he could have forgotten how she had tried to prevent her aunt from speaking and him from hearing; if he could have forgotten her pale face, and her silence, her weak defence, her assertions of innocence, unsupported by proof; if he could have forgotten all those tokens that had condemned her, and risen before him to say, “Whether from love,

or hate, or vengeance, or cupidity, she has abetted it—she let it be done, and she reaped the gain !” But he could not. He tortured his mind to acquit her, and he could not. She had not warned him, she had refused to answer Mrs. Logan—if ever silence was guilty hers was. But if the cloud which doubt had called up would not be dispelled, if it ever floated between him and his wife’s image, and only grew darker and denser with every effort he made to break it, so there also rose in his heart a bitter resentment against every human being connected with his wrong. He hated Mrs. Luan and Mrs. Courtenay for having plotted it, and he could scarcely forgive Miss Moore or Mrs. Logan for having helped to reveal it. Toward Dora his feelings were too implacable for either hate or forgiveness. She was the embodiment of his misery—the being whose betrayal had caused it, and whose falsehood had given it a more cruel and a keener pang.

On reaching Paris Mr. Templemore went to one of the hotels in the Rue de Rivoli, where he was in the habit of stopping. “And now,” he thought, as he entered rooms gay with sunshine, and beyond which he caught a bright glimpse of the Tuileries gardens, “now how am I to get rid of this pain ?” Question hard to answer. Pleasure, which had never had any charms for Mr. Templemore, was now odious. He hated crowds, and solitude he knew is cruel and dangerous. He would not have Eva or Miss Moore with him, for one could only remind him of his fond illusion, and the other of its bitter waking. So, as he suffered cruelly and keenly, he did what the intellectual and the strong often do in such emergencies, he took refuge in study from his pain.

There were few branches of knowledge which he had not already tried, but for some he had never felt any ardent devotion. Statistics and political economy had been least favored by him. He now took to them with a sort of

fury. Population, shipping, standing armies, disease, had their turn ; he heaped his room with blue-books, and covered quires of paper with estimates, returns, and calculations ; he worked night and day, not caring all the time for the result of his labor, and he succeeded in bringing on himself a fit of illness which lasted a fortnight, and from which he issued languid, listless, and more unhappy than ever.

Neither time, nor work, nor illness had cured him. Time had only added to the resentful bitterness of his feeling, and to the severity of the condemnation his judgment had passed on the offender ; but it was still the same wound which bled inly, it was still the cruel thought that Dora was his wife, and that she was worthless of a man’s love. Integrity, honor, delicacy, were the ruling feelings of Mr. Templemore’s mind. The woman who had failed in these, even though for love of him, could never be again to him the woman whom nothing and no one could have tempted to sin. And yet, and though his sense of her error grew keener daily, his feelings had undergone a change. If he still thought of her guilt, he now thought very little of his wrong. He did not regret Florence, he scarcely regretted his liberty, but he passionately regretted his wife, that innocent being, all love and brightness, whom he had had for a few days, and who had so soon worn the common hues of mortality. Oh ! to go back to that time of dear illusions, to possess a girl so happy, so fond, and so true ! To feel bound to her for life, to dread no wakening, to look forward without fear to the long future !

But it is no relief to think a once loved being unworthy, and these thoughts seemed so bitter to Mr. Templemore, one evening as he sat by the window of his room looking out on the stirring scene in the Rue de Rivoli below, that he could endure them no longer. He rebelled under their torture, and taking his hat walked out.

He went forth idly, neither knowing nor caring whither his steps took him. On turning the corner of a street, he suddenly found himself on the Boulevards. The night was black, not a star shone in the cloudy sky; but the two rows of lamps made an endless avenue of light before him. The shops were brilliant and gay; cafés glittered like fairy palaces, and crowds were abroad to enjoy what freshness there was in the stormy air. Mr. Templemore found none. Close and sultry felt the atmosphere. The young trees which rose dimly before him, their trunks and lower branches lit, and their summits vanishing in gloom, seemed to him as oppressive as the roof of a forest. Yet he went on, leaving boulevard after boulevard behind him, and he never thought of stopping till a dense group suddenly checked his progress. Mr. Templemore then looked up. Before him he saw the rising steps and the columned front of a theatre. People were going in eagerly. He hesitated awhile, then he too went up the steps, paid for his place, and within five minutes he was seated in one of the galleries.

Mr. Templemore had not gone to the play for several years. He liked none save the finest acting and singing, and, being a man of fastidious tastes, he did not admit the existence of such very readily. Weariness of spirit had alone tempted him this evening to enter a second-class house, where the actors were probably suited to the plays they performed in. He wondered at himself for having done so; he looked around him, and wondered still more at the gay, eager faces he saw. The musicians in the orchestra were talking and laughing together as they tuned their instruments—he wondered at them too. Amongst them was a lively little dark man, who could not be quiet a moment; he shook his black head of hair, he rolled his eyes, he screwed his mouth, and looked very like an animated nut-cracker. Mr. Templemore

watched him with a sort of interest; the vitality of that swarthy little musician was attractive to one whose present mood was so drearily languid. The curtain rose, the performance began, the actors spoke, and still Mr. Templemore's eyes were fixed on the orchestra, and he thought, "What a curious idiosyncrasy that man must have!"

"How charmingly she is dressed, whispered a voice near him. He glanced toward the speaker. She was a girl of eighteen or so, plump and good-humored-looking. She addressed another girl, her sister, evidently, as plump, and seemingly as good-tempered as herself. Beside them sat their mother, a bourgeoisie of forty, who had been at twenty what they were now. What absence of all care appeared in these three faces! Nothing was there, not even the excitement of pleasure; nothing beyond the calm, sensual content of satisfied animal existence. Mr. Templemore turned back from them to the musician, but in so doing his look passed across the stage, and he uttered a deep, startled "Ah!" which was heard over the whole house, and drew every eye upon him.

But Mr. Templemore saw and heeded but one thing; for there, on the stage before him, stood his wife, dressed in white muslin, gay, young, and lovely. She stood alone in a gloomy room, with a dim and sombre background behind her solitary figure, and her head half averted. It was she—so said the first look; that was the turn of her neck, her figure, and her attitude; but she looked round, and the charm was broken; she spoke, and it was gone. But the shock which that momentary illusion had caused could not vanish with it; nor the subtle thrill of joy it had wakened, cease. When this girl looked at the audience, Mr. Templemore could not look at her; but when she turned away and became once more the image of his young wife, in her light motions and easy attitudes, he leaned forward, with his elbow resting on

the crimson velvet of the balustrade, unconscious of the observation which his eager gaze attracted. His very heart was moved within him with a soft and delicious emotion. It was like going back to the first wondering happiness of his marriage to feel as he now felt. All that love, which had seemed buried in arid desolation, like sweet waters beneath the sand of the desert, welled back to his heart with tenfold power. Mr. Templemore did not strive against it—he let that full tide come and rise and master him, and he felt blest to the very core in his subjection.

When the curtain fell, on the first act, and she vanished, he breathed deeply, and for the first time he tried to think and be calm. Vain attempt; thought would not come at his bidding—nothing came but a vague, passionate yearning to be gone, and be with her once more. He could scarcely resist the desire which bade him rise and depart that moment. An express-train left in the middle of the night. It would take him to Rouen in little more than two hours; he could be at Les Roches before dawn—long before Dora had wakened!

The two plump girls and their mother gave him wondering looks, and he did not heed them. The little fantastic musician played strange tricks with his violin, and Mr. Templemore had no eyes for him now. His thoughts were far away in a large room, hushed and dim, where his wife lay sleeping. A lamp burned faintly on a white toilet-table, and was reflected in its oval glass, half veiled by lace and muslin. A far door opened, and he saw himself enter slowly, with step that fell noiselessly on the carpet. He saw that wraith of his own being approach, then stand still, and look at Dora's face as it rested on her pillow. And now the vision swiftly became retrospective. He remembered looking at her thus once in Deenah. He remembered wondering, as he looked, at the childish calmness of her

slumbering mien. The bright hair which had strayed on her pillow, the closed lids, the calm breath, came back to him with a sense of pain. He felt as if he had wronged and deserted a child intrusted to his keeping.

"I should have stayed with her," he thought; "innocent or guilty, I should not have left her."

"Innocent or guilty?" repeated a secret voice.

"Oh! my God, if she be guilty, what a lot is mine! Am I tied to treachery, to sin so perversely allied with that look of innocence? Am I tied to grace and youth, it is true, but also to horrible iniquity?"

All his old anguish came back at the thought. If his passionate nature, ardent and susceptible to loveliness—as indeed is that of most men—felt but too keenly the power of his young wife's bright face, the nobler nature within him made him revolt from the thought of this ignoble bondage. He could not endure the contrast between that fair outside and the sullied soul. Ay, truly, it is hard to us all to think that sin can abide behind the roses of those cheeks and the star-like radiance of those eyes. It is hard that we should not ever find the breath of innocence on those fresh young lips, which give us heaven when they smile. It is a cruel case, but Mr. Templemore had not reached thirty without knowing that it is a frequent one—only he had never thought it would be his. The bitter doubt now waxed higher and higher, sweeping away before it every tender fancy, every flower of love or hope. His neighbors watched his darkening face and gloomy eyes with something like uneasiness. What had brought him here, a sullen, uncongenial stranger, freezing the mere thought of pleasure away!

The curtain rose, the second act began. At first he heeded nothing, but the girl who reminded him of Dora appeared again, and again the subtle thrill ran through his veins

and subdued him. This time, too, he paid some attention to the play. It was a love-drama, with many a passionate scene, and no doubt some pathos, for the two girls next Mr. Templemore brought out their pocket-handkerchiefs, and used them freely. Indeed, he saw a good deal of this going on around him, but he remained callous and unmoved, till, all unwillingly, he was conquered. This heroine had married a man whom she did not like, and her husband, discovering it too late, felt and said, "I shall never be loved—never!" The curtain fell as he uttered the words, which rang through Mr. Templemore's brain, wakening a whole train of fond recollection. Dora was his wife, but she loved him. Ay, though her sins were of the deepest and the darkest dye, she loved him and she was his—for better, for worse, she was his. He could not renounce her or exclude her from his life and his heart. Religion, duty combined with love to say to him, "Why did you leave her? Had you not vowed that your arms should be her shelter from every ill; and is it not her right to live and die by your side? You cannot banish her thence without sin—then thank Heaven that her affection, her youth and its attractions, make obedience to this duty so easy and so sweet."

Mr. Templemore heard this secret monitor, and he did not answer it at once. He leaned his forehead on his hand, and let a vision come before him—a vision of a tearful yet happy Dora, who welcomed him back with a smile and a kiss. Often had she come thus to him before this hour, and as often had he banished her with a stern "Begone!" But now he could not—he would not. She was his wife, and there was a protecting tenderness in his embrace. She was his wife, and his heart yearned toward her with infinite charity. His love should cover all her errors, and lead her back to those pure paths whence she had strayed; his love should be to her as

a human redemption, making more easy her return to the divine source of all goodness. She was his erring lamb, who had wandered in the wilderness, and whom he would bring back to the gentle fold of love and home. He remembered the solemn precept, too, much forgotten by a passing world of the great Apostle of the Gentiles:

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church."

He remembered it in that vanity fair of pleasure and its votaries, a theatre. For what spot, howsoever profane, is there which the voice of God will not pierce to reach man's heart? And if human passion and tenderness still mingled in Mr. Templemore's breast with holier feelings—if he could not forget a fair face and a soft voice—if one was the joy of his eyes, and the other the sweetest of music to his ear, yet over all ruled that feeling of duty that had been the great guide of his life, and which had given him in Dora Courtenay its mingled joy and torment.

How long these thoughts kept him, Mr. Templemore did not know. The third act was progressing, and had reached its great crisis of despair and passion, when he looked at his watch, rose, and left the house. The two girls and their mother looked after him in some wonder, and exchanged puzzled glances, then placidly returned to the play. Truly they little guessed what a drama of doubt, and love, and regret—ay, and of passion too—had been silently enacted near them that evening.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE night was darker than ever when Mr. Templemore went out once more on the Boulevards. The crowd was thinning, in expectation of a storm. Mr. Templemore's mood was not one which such contingencies affect. He

had but one thought, and that mastered him; yet he suddenly paused, as he reached the Rue de la Paix, and saw its shops alive with light. He remembered the diamond cross he had ordered from one of the jewellers there, and he wondered if it were ready. It was only ten o'clock; he had time to go and try.

These jewellers' shops in the Rue de la Paix were a wonderful sight at night during that year. Crowds gathered around them evening after evening, gazing in eager admiration at the treasures displayed within. One diamond shop outtrivalled all the others, and out-rivals them still. Tiaras, necklaces, bracelets, ear-rings, blazed in their immortal splendor. Fair brows and fairer bosoms, on which they glittered once, have shrunk into dust, and it matters very little. They will outlive generations; that gorgeous bracelet will clasp the slender wrist, that diadem will shine all light in the dark hair of some beauty yet unborn, and flatterers will tell her, "Your eyes are brighter by far than these," and—who knows?—perhaps she will believe them.

As to that, all the diamonds in this shop, which he now entered, could not have matched Dora's eyes in Mr. Templemore's estimation just then. He knew, indeed, that their lustre would grow dim—that the blooming cheek would fade, and the fair skin lose its youthful beauty—but all the better reason was this for holding them dear, and adorning them whilst they lasted. With something like eagerness, he now asked if the cross he had ordered was ready.

This temple of the god worshipped in Gollconda had a high-priest worthy of his office—an aged man, with a lofty brow, white hair, that flowed from beneath a black silk cap, and eyes which had gazed so long on diamonds that they could see little else in life. On hearing Mr. Templemore's request, he opened a drawer near him, and produced a small morocco case, which he handed to his cus-

tomor. Mr. Templemore opened it. On a bed of blue velvet lay a diamond cross, consisting of eleven perfect diamonds, not of large size, indeed, but of such exquisite water, and such dazzling lustre, that he uttered an exclamation of pleasure and admiration, qualified, however, by the words:

"This is surely more expensive than the one I asked from you?"

"It is," mildly replied the jeweller; "double the price, I believe; but, then, it is three times more beautiful than you expected it to be."

Mr. Templemore could not deny that. He took the cross and looked at it in the hollow of his hand. Each of its eleven diamonds was pure and clear as a drop of morning dew sparkling in the early sun. "Will you take a check for this?" he asked; "I have not money enough to pay you—besides, I am going off at once."

"A check will do very well," replied the jeweller, in his mild tone. "This is the fifteenth, sir—the fifteenth of July."

And as Mr. Templemore sat down to fill up the blank check which he took from his pocket-book, the jeweller opened the drawer again and took out another morocco case, which he silently placed before him.

"I only ordered the cross," said Mr. Templemore, looking up, puzzled.

"Perhaps you would like a necklace," suggested this mild tempter; and he opened the case and stepped back.

Mr. Templemore was dazzled. He had never seen such a necklace as this. A queen alone could have worn it. This was no conjunction of small diamonds artfully mounted in leaves, and flowers, and pendants, and spread out to the greatest possible extent. No, it was one plain row of large stones, every one of which seemed priceless to Mr. Templemore. Dora had a beautiful neck, soft and white—truly these diamonds would look well upon it. But

was he a nabob, that he should even ask to know the price of a gift so costly?

"I chose every one of those stones myself," said the jeweller; "I went to Russia for this centre one, and to London for that, one of the smallest, but, as you see, it matches the ninth stone perfectly, and unless in London I could not have found it. It cost me three months to negotiate for it, for it was in hands that were reluctant to part with it—they knew its value and its beauty, and it is one of the smallest in the necklace. Guess from that, sir, what toil and trouble the other stones have given me."

"It is a wonderful necklace," said Mr. Templemore, taking and handling it—"a wonderful necklace; only there is no art in it. It is plain and gorgeous."

"There should be no art in diamonds," replied the jeweller, with a strange light in his eye. "They are above and beyond it, sir."

"Well, perhaps they are," said Mr. Templemore, but he put down the necklace, and did not ask to know its price.

"I believe, sir, you are newly married," continued the jeweller, in his mild tone; "this would be a beautiful wedding-gift."

Mr. Templemore felt almost provoked at this cool seducer, who spoke of a priceless necklace as a "beautiful wedding-gift." He little knew that its owner offered it to every one of the customers who entered his shop, pressed it upon them even to importunity, and yet would not have parted to a monarch with one of its smallest diamonds. He little suspected that these glorious bits of liquid light, all fire and pure effulgence, slept every night in the bed of that white-haired man—that he loved them with something of the guilty, insane love which two hundred years before made Cardillac murder the men and women who bought his jewels; and that when they were stolen from him a few months after Mr. Templemore's visit, the shock of their loss, though they were

recovered within the week, sent him to the grave a maniac.

Unconscious of the strange love which was to lead to so tragic an ending, Mr. Templemore only felt provoked at the persistence with which the jeweller pressed this necklace upon him, and putting the cross in his breast coat-pocket, he left the shop. The jeweller, however, followed him to the door, and still said in his mild voice:

"It is a rare necklace, sir. You will never get another like it—better have it."

Mr. Templemore walked away without giving him any answer. "The man is crazy, and I am crazy too," he thought, taking the direction that led to his hotel; "I suppose those glittering pebbles have bewitched me, for here am I foolish enough to wish I could buy them and throw them round Dora's neck."

It was folly, no doubt, but it did not go away at once. He saw the diamonds glittering before him like stars in the darkness of the night. He saw them sparkling on his wife's bosom, and if diamonds look strange and ominous on yellow necks and bony shoulders, who can deny their fitness and their beauty when they rest on a satin skin and rounded outlines like Dora's? Mr. Templemore was fascinated with the vision. He felt almost tempted to turn back and ask the price of this wonderful necklace; but he checked himself in time, and indeed waxed wrathful at his own folly. A year's income of his fortune could not pay for the bauble. Had he lost his senses that he even contemplated this act of madness? Alas! it was not all madness—there is a foud, passionate instinct, which is a very part of love—the wish to fling all that there is most costly, most precious, and most rare, at the feet of the loved object. For many days Mr. Templemore had struggled against his love for Dora, and spite his doubts and his misgivings, that love now came back to him powerful, mighty, and triumphant. It came back to him not as it had left him, con-

quered and sorrow-stricken, but like the spirit in Scripture, who, after wandering midst barren places, returns with sevenfold power.

Mr. Templemore had not walked far, still thinking of his wife and the diamond necklace, when the long-threatening storm broke forth. Drops of rain, large as crown-pieces, dotted the white pavement of the Place Vendôme, which he was crossing. Then a lightning-flash pierced the sky, and lit the dark column cast in cannon won from many a battle-field, and whence the first Napoleon looks down over his capital, still seeming to triumph alike over foe and subject. A deep-echoing thunder-peal followed, then came a very deluge of rain, and long before he reached his hotel, Rue de Rivoli, Mr. Templemore was wet through. The rain was summer rain, mild and soft, and he cared not for it. He packed his trunk hastily, secured a carriage, and drove off to the station, whilst the storm was at its highest. It was a gale, too, as well as a storm; a furious tempest, which might leave its traces on many a bleak coast, as well as in crowded cities. Mr. Templemore had seen a shipwreck once, and who that has beheld the ominous sight can ever forget it? He remembered it now; the noble vessel struggling gallantly against the waves that drove her on, the long line of shore and cliff vanishing in spray and in the darkness of the tempest; the pale moon looking down from a cloudy sky, the silent crowd, and the fearful roar, as waves and ship all came tumbling together on the beach, whilst through all the din was to be heard the faint, shrill cry of a woman. They found her on the sands the next morning, a pale corpse, with wet hair. Mr. Templemore wondered why that scene came back to him now, as if he had beheld it but yesterday?

"How do I know," he thought, "that this summer storm will be so fatal as that never-to-be-forgotten equinoctial gale on the shores of the Atlantic? Its roaring wind may indeed uproot the mighty forest-tree, or its lightning

kill helpless flocks on distant moors; but truly I hope and trust that no drowning wretch will call on Heaven this night in his agony?"

Mr. Templemore reached the station as the express train was going to start. Within five minutes he sat alone in a railway-carriage, and was going at full speed through the drenched landscape. And now he had time to think over a subject of some importance.

How would his wife receive him? He returned to her as he had left her—at his pleasure. He could give no motive for the one act, save that he did not choose to stay with her, and for the other that he could do without her no longer. Would Dora, a proud woman, accept either explanation? Had he not, then, best be silent, and take upon himself that law of *bon plaisir* which every now and then comes up in the heart even of the best of mén? For, after all, Mr. Templemore could not ask his wife to forgive him. If his passion for her, supported by necessity, was so strong that he could not resist it, and must needs go back to her, innocent or guilty, yet, spite all the diamonds he had wished to give her, he was not a convinced and converted man. He would have given anything to believe in her innocence, and doubt still forbade belief—even though his whole heart yearned toward the one and revolted against the other. With a sort of despair he went over the whole sad story again, and wearied, but still perplexed, he came back to the old thought: "She is my wife; I cannot help that no more than I can help loving her—I must keep to that, and let the rest be."

But can love endure when its foundation of reverence is wanting? And if the fever which was still so strong upon him ceased, would not the final waking be horrible? Alas! he thought of that too; but that time, which it was so gloomy to foresee, had not come yet, and as he reached Rouen, and, leaving the train, entered a carriage which was to convey

him to Les Roches, he wilfully shut his eyes to all the bitterness that had preceded his departure, and only remembered that he was going to the home where his young wife lay sleeping, unconscious of his return.

The porter at the lodge had to be wakened to let in his master, and Jacques to leave his attic in order to admit him within. The clang of the great bell, the grinding wheels of the carriage on the gravel, made a loud noise in the stillness of the gray morning; but Mr. Templemore looked in vain for signs of light behind the window curtains of his wife's room. Jacques, who let him in, seemed stupid with sleep. His master did not question him; he took the light from the man's hand, merely saying:

"You may go. I want nothing."

Jacques was a plethoric young man. He liked his sleep above all things. He now thought himself ill-used by his master's return at such an hour, and he went back to his room grumbling all the way. He had scarcely reached the upper floor, however, when a furious ringing summoned him below. He found Mr. Templemore on the landing at the door of his wife's room, pale as death, and with the light still in his hand.

"Where is your mistress?" he asked.
 "Where is my wife?"

His looks, his tones so confounded Jacques, that he could scarcely reply. At length he said,

"Madame is gone."

"Gone!" He was going to ask "With whom?" but he checked himself. "Tell Madame Courtenay I wish to speak to her," he said.

Jacques looked very odd.

"Madame Courtenay is dead, sir."

"Dead?"

"Yes, sir. Mademoiselle Fanny brought the news when she came back for Madame's things. Madame Courtenay died on the way."

"And Madame Luan and her son," exclaimed Mr. Templemore—"where are they?"

Jacques looked very odd again.

"Monsieur Luan is gone, sir, we do not know where, and Madame Luan is dead too. She died in a madhouse the very morning Madame Templemore went away. She had attempted to kill madame one evening."

Mr. Templemore felt as if he were going through a dreadful nightmare. Death, madness, danger had visited his deserted home during his absence: and now where was Dora? Where was the wife whom he had left to trials so fearful, and who had passed through them alone?

"Where is she now?" he asked, much agitated. "Where did she go to?"

"Monsieur Luan took her to an asylum, and she died there."

"I mean your mistress. Where is your mistress?"

But Jacques knew nothing. Madame had not said anything. She had left no letter? No—nothing that could give a clew. Mademoiselle Fanny, when she came back for madame's things had said they were going to England, and the servants had supposed it was to join monsieur. The servants had all noticed that madame looked very miserable. Perhaps she felt nervous, and afraid to remain alone after having run the risk of being murdered.

So said Jacques, in a heavy, stupid, monotonous voice. Mr. Templemore shuddered with horror as he heard him talk thus stolidly of his wife's peril. Yet he could not help asking to know the particulars of this domestic drama. Jacques, nothing loath, and indeed quite lively, went through the scene for his master's benefit. "Madame was so by the toilet, when she heard the door open and saw Madame Luan enter. At once, and with great presence of mind, madame put out the light and stepped out on the balcony. And so,"

continued Jacques, assuming the part of Mrs. Luan and groping with outstretched arms, as if in the darkness toward the window, "so I try to get at her and kill her. Though I cannot see, I know where she is, and she is as mute as a mouse—but I know where she is—now I am at the window, and the moon is shining—now I have her!"

But as Jacques, outstripping truth in the fervor of his acting, was stretching his arm toward an imaginary Dora, a hand of iron seized his own throat and held him fast.

"How dare you? How dare you?" asked Mr. Templemore, shaking with anger; then recovering his composure, he said, not without some shame at his own violence, "You may leave me now, Jacques."

"And I can tell you I left him pretty quickly," was Jacques's comment as he related this incident to the porter the next morning. "For if ever man looked like a tiger, it was our master as he held me then."

Mr. Templemore remained alone in his wife's room, and locked himself up with this new trouble.

He sat down and looked around him. Was this indeed the return to which he had looked forward? This cold, vacant chamber bore no likeness to that which his fancy had conjured up a few hours before in the theatre. Dust had gathered on the mirror of the toilet-table, and thus told him how long it had ceased to reflect Dora's image. No token of her presence lingered about. It was as if Mr. Templemore had never seen her there, sleeping or waking. The very air of the unused apartment had grown chill. Ah! this was not the meeting he had imagined as he came up the staircase with a beating heart. Where were the tears and reproaches he was to silence with caresses? His wife was gone, and, insupportable thought! she was gone with just anger and bitterness in her heart against him. Was she innocent or guilty? He did not

think of that now. He only thought that he had forsaken her, and that she had gone alone through frightful danger and bitter sorrow. Where was he when the madwoman attempted her life?—when her mother's eyes closed in death? His eyes grew dim, his lip quivered at the question. Oh! fatal error, ever to have left her—fatal, and in one sense irreparable. she was his wife, the law gave him full power over her—he could pursue the fugitive and compel her return; but could he make her forget that he had believed a madwoman's story against her?

And these were not Mr. Templemore's only thoughts. If Fanny's assertion were to be believed, his wife had gone to England after her mother's death. What for, and to whom? Surely not to John Luan! Yet Dora had no friends in England—at least, she had often said so. Then what took her there?

Mr. Templemore could not bear to wrong her in this matter. And yet the thought that she had gone to England, that she was near John Luan, that she had her cousin to comfort her in her sorrow, and to sympathize with her in her wrongs, was more than he could endure. It revived his lurking jealousy, and gave it both form and substance. This young man loved Dora; and it is not pleasant, even to the least jealous of husbands, to think that the wife whom he has injured receives consolation from a rejected lover. And this had been going on for days and weeks! The thought stung him. She was his wife, after all. What right had she to leave his home without a word, spoken or written, and go to a strange city and stay there? What right had she to expose their domestic differences to the world by a flight he could not attempt to disguise? Gradually Mr. Templemore forgot the wrongs he had inflicted, and only remembered those he had received. He remembered them; and with something like wrath he resolved to set off for England at

once, follow his wife, and bring her back without delay. "Whether she likes it or not she shall return," he thought, ringing the bell angrily for Jacques, who had just fallen into a pleasant doze. "She shall return to this house, which she should never have left."

But of all men Mr. Templemore was the last who could stifle the voice of conscience. He had left both his wife and his home. She had only left the house whence her aunt had been removed insane, whence he had banished her mother, where not even his child had been trusted to her care.

"I have been to blame," thought Mr. Templemore, with a sharp, remorseful pang; "but I will make amends—I will make amends."

How many an erring heart has uttered the words, and, alas! to how few the power to fulfil them has been granted!

CHAPTER XLVIII.

A DISTANT church clock was striking eleven when Dr. John Luan turned the corner of Bedford Square. He had scarcely walked a few steps toward his dwelling when a hand was laid on his shoulder. He looked round sharply, and, by the light of a gas-lamp, he saw Mr. Templemore. They had never met, yet John Luan knew at once this was Dora's husband.

"Good-evening," gravely said Mr. Templemore. "I believe you know me. Your servant told me you are going away early to-morrow morning, so I shall not detain you long. My errand is quickly told. Mrs. Templemore forgot to leave her direction when she went away from Les Roches. May I trouble you for it?"

John Luan had got over the shock of unpleasant astonishment he had felt on seeing Dora's husband, but this abrupt demand startled him anew.

"You want Dora's address from me!" he said, sharply.

"Why not? You do not mean to say, I suppose, that your cousin is here in London without your knowledge, Mr. Luan?"

"And do you mean to say that your wife is here in London without *your* knowledge, Mr. Templemore?"

He spoke with bitter emphasis, but Mr. Templemore had come resolved not to lose his temper.

"Am I likely to put such a question without need?" he said, gravely.

And so she had left him! His cruelty and his unkindness had compelled her to leave her home and her husband. And her wronger now applied to the man whom he had robbed of his treasure for information concerning the spot where it lay concealed! John Luan's blood boiled within him—but he was not given to express anger, and he only said with sulky bitterness:

"I know nothing about your wife, Mr. Templemore."

He turned to the house, as if to end the matter; but Mr. Templemore quietly stepped between him and the door.

"I will not be balked thus," he said, doggedly. "I impute no wrong to her or to you, but you know her address, and I will have it!"

"You impute no wrong," repeated John Luan, in great indignation; "and pray what wrong could there be? just tell me that, sir. And, moreover, what do you mean by coming to me to ask for *your* wife? Ask her mother, ask Mrs. Courtenay where she is, and do not trouble me with a matter in which I have no concern."

"Doctor John Luan," said Mr. Templemore, with some disdain, "Mrs. Courtenay is dead, and I dare say you know it."

"Dead!" repeated John Luan, with such genuine amazement that Mr. Templemore's

heart fell. If the young man did not know that, he knew nothing. Where, then, was Dora?

The same question seemed to offer itself to the mind of Dora's cousin. He turned almost fiercely on Mr. Templemore.

"Where is she?" he said. "When and how did my aunt die? Where is Dora?"

"I was away at the time," answered Mr. Templemore, briefly; "I believe Mrs. Courtenay died in England, but I have no certainty."

"And why were you away?" tauntingly asked John Luan. "What! married a fortnight, and away so long that your mother-in-law is dead, and your wife is vanished when you return?"

"Why I went away your mother might have told you," bitterly answered Mr. Templemore; "but let that rest. I did not come here to account to you for matters of which you are no judge. You say you do not know where Dora is. Be it so. You can give me no information, and I have nothing to tell you."

He left him as he spoke thus; but John Luan soon overtook him.

"Have you nothing to tell me?" he said, losing all self-control in the bitterness of his feelings; "but may be I have something to say to you. I tell you, sir, that if Dora does not soon appear, I shall hold you guilty of her fate, whatever that may be. I tell you there is a great fear upon me, and that if this double grief should have proved too much for her, I shall hold you guilty before God and man!"

"A fear—what fear?" asked Mr. Templemore, who was almost as angry as John Luan now.

"You know what fear," was the taunting reply, "for you feel it too. You know what fear, for it brought you here to question me. I say it again, if it prove true, I shall hold you guilty."

He walked away abruptly, and Mr. Templemore did not follow him.

"I suppose he has a touch of his mother's madness," he thought, trying to conquer his wrath by scorn.

He felt angry, and nothing else. The fear John Luan had alluded to could take no hold upon him. That Dora had left him in anger he knew—that she could have left him in the despair which leads to the darkest end of a human life he would not admit for a moment, and as he, too, walked away in hot indignation, he wondered that John Luan should have dared to suggest a close so cruel to Dora's brief wedded life. But if Mr. Templemore rejected with anger and scorn this torturing conjecture, he was full of perplexity and grief as he walked home to his hotel. He knew nothing, he had learned nothing, and he felt powerless. Reason, philosophy, and will had lost their boasted power over him now. The wife whom he had so injudiciously left had fled from him, and he knew not how to conjure her back, how to charm away the sorrows he had caused, how to prevent the troubles, and perhaps the dangers, that might beset her path. He knew that if he could find her she would forgive him—he did not doubt that one moment; only where was the fugitive, and how far had she fled? But if Mr. Templemore felt troubled and perplexed, he did not feel despondent.

Money is a great magician, and he knew it. Money will unveil the most closely-guarded secrets, and light up some of society's darkest and most hidden nooks. It is the Sesame before which doors fly open, or at whose bidding they close again with inexorable sternness. And money Mr. Templemore had. With money he could soon be on her track, and arrest her flight. He was of a sanguine disposition, and he now felt certain of success. Perhaps he was rather pleased, after all, not to have found his wife through the medium of

her cousin. Perhaps it was more soothing to his pride to have to go and seek and pacify her himself, than to have found her with scarcely an effort, but through that young man's means. However well he might think of Dora, it was not to John Luan's care that he would have consigned her. But the fact that she had not sought this young man, who, though a lover, was also her only relative, showed Mr. Templemore that his wife was still all his. Her grief would admit no comforter, and had no need to be spoken. She could make a dreary companion of it, and take it with her to solitude.

"I shall soon find her," thought Mr. Templemore, as he paced his room up and down, for he was too restless for sleep; "she is either in Paris or in London. In either city money will command men whose seent, quickened by greed, is keener than that of bloodhounds, and who will detect her refuge, however close it may be. I shall soon find her, in a week—in ten days, perhaps—in a fortnight, at the utmost."

He looked out of the window on the gas-lit streets; he longed to detect a grayness in the black sky and be gone; but time and tide, which wait for no man, will also hurry their course for none. All Mr. Templemore's impatience only made the night seem more tedious, and took not one second's weight from its feverish hours. At length day came, and with it departure. The train flew through the country, the steamboat crossed the sea; a few hours more, and Mr. Templemore, after stopping on a needful errand in Rouen, entered Les Roches. He met Jacques as he was going up the steps that led to the porch. A look at the man's face told Mr. Templemore that Jacques had no news for him. He put no questions, but said briefly—

"I expect a visitor this evening or to-morrow. Show him in at once, no matter what the hour may be."

He entered the house, and said no more;

but Jacques knew very well what this meant, and when he went down to the kitchen, he commented upon his master's domestic misfortunes to the cook and the two housemaids, whom he found there. "Monsieur had just come back," he said, "and he had looked at him, Jacques, so."

And as the gift, or at least the taste for acting was strong upon Jacques, he rolled his eyes in imitation of his master, and bent them on the cook in a way that horrified her.

"You are hideous, Monsieur Jacques," she said—"do not, you are hideous!"

"I am only showing you how monsieur looked," composedly replied Jacques; "upon which I looked so," he added, putting on, with considerable success, the stolid, immovable face of a well-bred servant-man.

The cook looked at him with more favor, and said he was quite "*comme il faut*" when he looked "so."

Jacques received the praise with profound indifference (cook was forty-five), and continued his imitation of his master's looks, appearance, and language, ending with the significant comment: "And so, as he could not find madame, he has sent the police after her. The 'agent' is coming this evening, and I am to show him in, no matter at what hour of the night."

This interesting piece of information caused some excitement in the minds of Jacques' three listeners. There never yet was a household without its factions, and Mr. Templemore's had been divided ever since his wife's flight had made his domestic troubles a subject of discourse amongst his servants. Jacques, the cook, and one of the housemaids, did not approve of Dora's elevation; the younger housemaid, on the contrary, admired so laudable a precedent, and gave it her warmest sanction. On hearing of the police agent, she set up an indignant scream, and exclaimed that it was "*une horreur!*"

"Stop, stop, mademoiselle, stop," dubiously said Jacques, who wished to impress this young lady with the extent of a husband's rights—hoping he might have to exercise them over her some day—to curb her ambition, which he considered dangerous, and yet, oh! difficult task, not to offend her. "Stop, I beg. If monsieur has, as there is no doubt, the right to get his wife brought back by gendarmes, so has he the right to have her found out by an 'agent.' The only thing is, are they married? Rich gentlemen do not marry governesses every day. There was no wedding. We saw nothing, and there may be nothing. Her aunt wanted to kill her, her cousin has a brain-fever, her mother dies, and she runs away. I say again, are they married? Who saw it?—who knows of it?"

This daring hypothesis silenced them all for a moment. Jacques resumed composedly:

"My belief is that poor mademoiselle, who was a good young lady in her way, promised her poor mother to behave better—and so she ran away."

The young house-maid, who had recovered by this, indignantly declared she did not believe a word Jacques had been saying, and asked, with considerable asperity, what right monsieur had to send gendarmes and police agents after madame if she were not his wife? This logic being irrefutable, was met by Jacques with the masculine reply, "that women, though highly gifted, did not know how to reason;" and a quarrel, in which cook took her share, followed, and led to a considerable delay in the hour of Mr. Templemore's dinner.

He little thought, as he was pacing his study up and down in a fever of expectation and anxiety, waiting for news with alternatives of hope and fear, that he was acting his sad part just then to entertain, interest, and excite his own servants. They are the first spectators of that drama in which, at some

time or other of existence, we all appear, for the benefit of our contemporaries. Whether they stand behind a chair in a black coat, or move about a villa in white cap and apron, they have the best places in all that wide audience which looks on so coolly whilst we strive and suffer. Oh! for the privilege of silence and solitude in these sad hours of life; for the right of hiding our agony, as the wild beast hides its death, in some dark hole or other! But from the days of the Roman emperor downward, life and death are transacted on the system of fame or approbation. "Farewell, and clap your hands!" says a dying Cæsar, when his part is out; and the very wretch on the scaffold dies not for himself alone. He dies for the crowd, for the reporters, for the newspapers, for that world which will coolly read of, or which beholds his last pangs with a callous and a curious eye. And he knows it and does his best. The evil is beyond remedy, and we generally put a good face upon it. Ignorance, besides, helps us to endurance. We rarely know the precise spot or hour when privacy ceases and publicity begins. Human pity allows us a few illusions, and we may hug ourselves on the hiding of a pain which is world-known all the time. Mr. Templemore knew in a general way that his servants must be very busy with his concerns just then, but he little knew how far their comments extended. It surely would have added a new sting to his lot if he could have heard the construction Jacques put on his young wife's flight. And yet some of these comments showed Jacques to be gifted with the acuteness of his class. On the afternoon of the next day a handsome florid man was shown into Mr. Templemore's study. He stayed five minutes, no more, yet so potent was his visit in its effects, that half an hour after his departure Mr. Templemore was sitting in a railway-carriage, going on to Paris at express speed. In his right hand he held

a scrap of paper, which he read again and again. It ran thus :

"On the third of July a lady in deep mourning, with her veil closely drawn over her face, entered the Rouen station, and took one first-class ticket for Paris. The lady who delivers the tickets could not see her well, but feels sure that she was young. She also noticed this strange lady's right hand; it was ungloved, small, and remarkably pretty. She likewise remembers that the lady wore a peculiar ring—a small gold serpent, with an emerald head."

That ring Mr. Templemore remembered well. True, it might have been lost or stolen, and its testimony could not be trusted absolutely, but the pretty hand he had so often admired, and which none could see and forget again, convinced him that this was Dora. This much he therefore knew, but he knew no more. What had happened during that week which had elapsed from the day on which Dora left Les Roches to the third of July? Where was Mrs. Courtenay? Was she living, or dead, as Fanny had said? Where was even Fanny? And what took Dora to Paris? These were questions which the florid gentleman had candidly declared himself unable to answer. With the clew in his hands—a frail one—Mr. Templemore was to find his wife in the great human ocean toward which he was speeding.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE hot sunset was filling the busy streets of Paris with a fiery glow, which shot up to their highest balconies, and turned the trees in the Tuileries into bronze and gold, when Mr. Templemore entered once more the Hôtel Rue de Rivoli, which he had left three evenings before. No other occupant had claimed his rooms, and he returned to them as a matter

of course. He found on the table a torn newspaper he had left there, and in a drawer some cigars which he had forgotten. The arm-chair was as he had placed it, near the window, and when he sat down in it, his eyes beheld the same bright scene they had gazed on an hour before he went out on the Boulevards. The children and nursery-maids trooping out of the Imperial Gardens, the tight little sentinel looking at them as they passed, the roll of carriages below, the loungers, all seemed as much the same, as unchanged as the glittering front of the palace itself, and the rich masses of trees, with a white statue gleaming through their sombre depths, or the glimmer of a fountain shining far away. Nothing was altered save his own mood. He had beheld these things with a cold, dreary gaze, the gaze of a man whom love and life have wronged, and who cannot forgive his wrongers. He looked at them now with the feverish impatience of one who has wrought his own undoing, who has cast the rare pearl of happiness away, and who knows not whether this world's deep and troubled sea will ever yield it back again.

What if days, weeks, months, nay, years should pass, and he should not find Dora! It was possible. Cruel and torturing was the thought. It seemed to pierce his flesh like a sharp arrow, and make it quiver with the pain. And he was powerless. He might employ such agents as he had already used, but by his own efforts he could not hope to succeed. Regret and baffled hope were his companions now, and with their sad society he must be content. Day after day memory would haunt him with a fair face, and bright hair, and the soft look of deep, gray eyes; and in the meanwhile time would wither, and death might destroy them—and what could he do? The thought had something so cruel and tantalizing in it, that, unable to bear it, Mr. Templemore took his hat and went out.

He knew it was too late, that his errand was a useless one, yet he entered the gardens, passed through them, went up the quays, then crossed one of the bridges, and soon found himself at the dull building where the Parisian police sits in state. But as Mr. Templemore had expected, the high official whom he wanted to see was gone, all the offices, indeed, were closed, and the *concierge* informed "mon-sieur that he had best return the next morning at ten."

Twilight was filling the streets as Mr. Templemore turned away; a few pale stars shone in the summer sky, a faint breath of freshness came on the air; windows which had been closed during the heat of the day now opened, and laughing girls and women looked out. But to Mr. Templemore all was vexation, all was weariness of spirit. The noble river flowing through its quays, the distant towers of Notre Dame rising dark in the hazy air, the palaces and gardens and lines of trees fading away in the soft heights behind which lay Saint-Cloud, the vast, murmuring city below, the calm and silent heavens above, were nothing to him now. A thought was on him, consuming as a quenchless thirst. That passion which had risen so suddenly in his heart, which he had thrust away from him with cruel and remorseless power, now came back to him as the chastisement of his double faithlessness. He had loved two women, and he had been quite true to neither. He had forgotten his betrothed in his wife, and he had visited on his wife the sin of that forgetfulness. Yes, he knew it well enough now. Shame at his own weakness had helped to make him so prompt to judge and condemn. He knew it, and what availed the knowledge?—what good came of it through that dreary evening and long, sleepless night?

By ten the next morning, Mr. Templemore had seen the high official whose assistance he needed, and before noon he had received infor-

mation to the effect that, on the night of the third of July, a lady, who gave the name of Templemore, had slept at the Hôtel du Parc, Rue de la Vigne, which she had left the next morning. It was useless to go and seek her there, yet Mr. Templemore could not resist the temptation of trying to find something beyond this meagre intelligence.

The Rue de la Vigne was a grave, lonely street, not far from the Havre railway-station. It had few shops, but many private houses, some of which were mansions, through whose open gates you caught glimpses of dull courtyards or green gardens. The Hôtel du Parc was a sober-looking house. No audacious dancing pagan nymph adorned its quiet court, but a modest, decorous muse stood in the centre of a grass-plot, which, by its green tone, added to the cool, shady look of the place. A sedate, steady-looking waiter of fifty stood at the gate in a contemplative attitude—the house was evidently both dull and respectable.

"Madame Templemore," said Mr. Templemore.

The waiter shook his head. They had no such lady. But she had lived there? The waiter thought not, but was not obstinate, and referred monsieur to the bureau. "There," he said, stifling a yawn, "monsieur would get every information."

The bureau was a little dark office on the ground floor, where a decent-looking woman sat reading a newspaper. On hearing Mr. Templemore's request, she went to an old ink-stained desk, opened a dingy manuscript volume, a Babel of names, and whilst she slowly searched through its pages, Mr. Templemore looked over her shoulder. Suddenly a fine, delicate handwriting, which he knew well, flashed before his eyes; there it was, clear and plain—"Madame Templemore, from Rouen."

"Ah! number twenty-one. The lady is gone, sir—she came on the third, and left the next morning."

"And can you give me no clew to her present abode, madame?"

Madame feared not, but obligingly called the waiter. From him, however, nothing could be extracted. "Gone, sir," he mildly said; "that is all we know."

In vain Mr. Templemore questioned. What the lady was like, if she had any luggage, how she left the hotel, at what hour, on foot or in a carriage, were matters on which the waiter professed profound ignorance. He fancied, indeed, that the lady had no luggage, and that she must have walked out of the hotel after paying her bill, but he would not pledge himself to it. They were full about that time, and the matter had escaped his memory. The *concierge*, the chambermaid, when questioned, were as ignorant. They too remembered a lady in mourning, with her veil down, but they remembered no more. Mr. Templemore tormented them all for an hour, and could get nothing else out of them. At length the waiter lost patience, and hinted that "monsieur had better apply to the police," and, sick at heart, Mr. Templemore turned away from that house which had sheltered his wife for one night, and kept no trace of her presence save that written token. One thing, however, was beyond doubt, Dora had come to Paris alone. "Her mother is dead," he thought.

He went back at once to the high official whom he had seen that morning; and again, on sending in his card, he was admitted to the presence of a gentleman whose cheerful, good-humored countenance gave not the faintest index to the nature of his professional duties. Surely those mild blue eyes might linger lazily over the daily papers, "Figaro" in especial, and take in accounts of theatres, dancers' quarrels, and the rest; but they had never gazed down the depths of social vice and crime. Such was the impression Mr. Templemore had received in the morning, and so strong was it still, that he reluctantly entered anew on the

prosecution of the matter that had brought him.

"I acted on the information you kindly sent me," he said, sitting down with a wearied sigh; "it certainly was my wife who slept on the third of July at the Hôtel du Parc; but she spent only one night there, and I can ascertain no more."

"Well, we know no more," said the high official, smiling; "we told you so."

"Yes; but surely you will be able to learn more than this?" urged Mr. Templemore.

"Oh! of course—with time."

The qualification was thrown in carelessly, as it were; but it made Mr. Templemore bend his keenest look on the man before him.

"I have great confidence in the Parisian police," he said, watching the high official, who leaned back in his arm-chair, and nodded every now and then a sort of assent to Mr. Templemore's words. "Their subtlety is unrivalled—nothing can equal their keenness when on the scent, save their dogged pertinacity in pursuit."

"Very handsome and complimentary," said the high official, smiling again, "and yet very true. Our men are first-rate, and not all French," he added. "We are cosmopolitan, sir."

"And I feel no doubt of success in the present case," continued Mr. Templemore.

"Nor do I; but I anticipate delay. I suspect we shall be stopped by the carriage as usual."

"By the carriage!"

"Yes, in all cases of mysterious disappearance, there is invariably a carriage. You see, since *fiares* got their liberty, we have lost our right hand, I may say. To be sure, they are, or ought to be, numbered; but the night vehicles often evade the law. How did we know that the lady went straight from the Havre station to the Hôtel du Parc? By the cabman! But, unluckily, no cabman can be

found to say that he took her away on the next morning. Yet it is very certain that she only spent one night there."

"Perhaps she took a porter," suggested Mr. Templemore, "and went on foot?"

"No porter in the neighborhood knows anything about her," replied the high official, who seemed perfectly conversant with every particular of the case. "We shall have hard work, sir—hard work. It is not easy to find people who are either unwilling or unable to help us."

"Unable!" said Mr. Templemore; "in what sense, may I ask?"

"We have now several cases of mysterious disappearance on hand," evasively replied the high official, "and they are all utterly inexplicable. Take this, for instance, which I shall call number one. A foreign nobleman of high rank, free from debt or embarrassment of any kind, so far as our knowledge extends, leaves his hotel one fine summer morning, and returns no more. He goes out on foot, but is seen driving in a common *fiacre* an hour later. This, and no more, is all the knowledge we have of his movements. His servants can give no clew, his relatives know nothing; and yesterday his landlord sold his carriages, his horses, and his furniture, to cover the rent, which happens to be high. Where is that young man? Is he hiding, and if so, for what reason? Is he dead, and how came he by his death? These, sir, are matters on which the keenest search has given us no sort of information."

Mr. Templemore looked impatient.

"A young man's freak," he said.

"Very likely; but number two has another complexion. An Indian merchant sends his wife, his sister, and his two children to Paris. The wife is young—not beautiful—pious and charitable—a fond wife and a fonder mother. Her life is spent in the greatest retirement. She seldom goes out alone. Well, sir, on an

unlucky day, when the sister-in-law is out, the young wife goes out too—on business, she tells her maid—and she never comes back. Weeks and months are devoted to the closest search, and we cannot find one trace of her—not one. Did she go out on some charitable errand, and fall into some dreadful trap, or was she a false wife? Heaven knows, sir; we do not—but I forgot to tell you that she sent for a carriage—a common *fiacre*—and that we can find no trace of the same."

Drops of perspiration were standing on Mr. Templemore's forehead.

"You spoke of a trap, sir—allow me to suggest that you thus pay a poor compliment to the Parisian police. Surely all evil-doers are under its special control and notice."

The high official smiled.

"I doubt, sir, if you imagine how far that notice and control extend. What will you think, sir, when I tell you that we have not merely the most accurate description of our black sheep over all France, but that, thanks to Caselli's telegraphic apparatus, their portraits and their autographs, sir, can be sent in a few moments to no matter what remote or obscure station."

"Then what trap can be feared?" impatiently asked Mr. Templemore.

"We find some cases inexplicable on any other hypothesis. Take number three, the last case with which I shall trouble you. A gentleman of middle age, of retired habits and literary tastes, holding a responsible though not lucrative position, suddenly declares that he must take a short journey on some private business. He takes little or no luggage with him; he is known to have but a small sum of money in his possession; he even leaves or forgets a hundred francs on the table in his room, and still, declaring that he shall not be more than twenty-four hours away, he enters a cab, which he had himself secured on his way home from his office to his private resi-

dence. The cabman no doubt knew whither to drive, for though the *concierge* stood at the door to listen, the man received no direction within her hearing. From that day to this we have not been able to get the least knowledge of number three. And do you know who number three was, sir?" asked the high official, rising, and laying his hand on Mr. Templemore's arm; "he was one of the chief men in our telegraphic office—the very man, sir, at whose suggestion the Caselli apparatus was first adapted to the detection of criminals."

If the high official had told Mr. Templemore all this to damp Mr. Templemore's ardor, and prepare him for ultimate defeat, he succeeded. Mr. Templemore looked turned to stone, and unable to speak. A trap!—for to that fearful suggestion his mind reverted—a trap in which his young wife might have fallen!—a trap so deep down in the dark nether world of crime, that, living or dead, it would never restore her to light! Was anything so sickening, so frightful, possible? He could not believe it, and with a strong effort he shook off the loathsome thought, and said, firmly:

"Excuse me, sir, if I tell you that in this great—this civilized city, perfect concealment of crime is next to impossible."

"Forever, very true; but for a time justice can be baffled. In the three cases I have mentioned we have found no corpses. The Morgue has told us nothing, the river has yielded back no victim, the lime-kilns and stone-quarries, which abound round Paris, as you may know, have been searched in vain, the vast sewers in this city have not screened the dead—in short, we are compelled to conclude that these missing persons have fled, and are hiding willingly, or that they have been foully dealt with, and buried in some hidden spot. That they may have been conveyed away forcibly is just possible, but wholly improbable."

"May I ask which you consider the more

likely hypothesis of the two?" inquired Mr. Templemore, as calmly as he could.

"I consider the chances equal. Crime is but too frequent, as we all know; and we all know, too, that seemingly unruffled lives often hide something which may make flight needful. The motive is not always apparent, but it exists, for all that. However, in this case we will for the present take a third hypothesis—that of ill-luck. A letter may have been written which you did not receive; some designing or foolish person may have broken the chain of evidence, and wantonly given us all this work, but it does not follow that we may not find the missing link again. We may find it to-day, or, maybe, in three weeks. Our agents are keen, cool, and steady, and we spend five millions a year."

He ceased, and Mr. Templemore, after a brief pause, which showed him that he had no more to learn, rose slowly and took his leave. But unreality was around him, and walked in his steps. The streets, the houses in them, the men and women whom he met, were all shadowy and dim. He had but one thought, and that was torture; but little by little the morbid and unnatural fear vanished. No, Dora had neither been kidnapped nor ensnared. She had fled from him in resentment, and it might be hard to find her again; but find her he must. He was sure of it—even as sure as that he could charm away her wrath.

By the time Mr. Templemore reached his hotel, he was as sanguine and as hopeful as ever. The event seemed to justify his anticipations. That very evening he received news from the police which made him flush up with joy. He seized his hat, went down-stairs, and left the hotel without saying a word to any one.

And now the high official had an excellent opportunity, if he chose to avail himself of it, to add number four to the list of his mysterious disappearances. Mr. Templemore

did not return that night, nor the next morning, nor for days that lengthened into weeks. He had left his trunk, his carpet-bag, his books, and even some money behind him, so great had been his haste, and still he neither returned, nor wrote, nor gave any clew to his whereabouts.

The master of the hotel was at first satisfied with scoring down the absent lodger's rooms to his account; but when a whole fortnight had passed by he cleared the apartments of Mr. Templemore's property, let them to other guests, and went and laid the whole matter before the police.

The police knew he was not in Paris, but they knew no more; the story spread and created a sensation, then it became a legend of the hotel, and still Mr. Templemore did not return.

CHAPTER L.

As there can be nothing in this world which does not belong to some one, so the legend of Mr. Templemore's disappearance was early appropriated and pertinaciously retained by the *concierge* in his late hotel. He had but one way of delivering it, but that was effective. Whenever a new-comer entered his comfortable room, and made inquiries concerning apartments to be had, the *concierge* would ejaculate thoughtfully: "Why, yes, there is number seven, the apartment of the poor gentleman who vanished so mysteriously; but did you say *one* room, sir? Then number seven will not do; better have number fifteen."

Paris was very busy just then with mysterious disappearances. Number three had been found drowned in England, but how he had come by that fatal end no one could say. It might be a suicide—it might be worse. A mystery it was, and would probably remain till the great Judgment-Day—the revealer of all

secrets. Now, the owner of Mr. Templemore's legend cherished the secret hope that it would have some such tragic ending. Thus—part the first; a mystery. Part the second: clearing of the mystery by a second mystery, never to be cleared on any account.

But it was not to be. A traveller came one afternoon, a skeptical traveller, a Thomas of Didymus, who sharply interrupted the legend, and denied it peremptorily, and asked "what ridiculous story this was?"

"Monsieur!" indignantly exclaimed the *concierge*; but he said no more. He stared with open mouth and eyes at the stranger, in whom he recognized Mr. Templemore himself. He was much worn, and looked haggard, but his identity could not be disputed, and thus ended number four and the legend.

Trouble and Mr. Templemore had been closely acquainted since we saw him last. Acting on information from the police, which convinced him that he had at length found his wife, Mr. Templemore had gone to a boarding-house in Passy, and asked to see Mrs. Foster, exactly a quarter of an hour after that lady had gone to England. He followed her at once, but reached the station ten minutes after the departure of the train. He took an express train, but the same ill-luck pursued him. There was an accident, the train was delayed two hours; and when Mr. Templemore reached Boulogne, he could see from the pier the smoke of a steamer fading away on the horizon. Mrs. Foster, he learned without a doubt, was on board.

This was but the first step in a keen pursuit, which ended in blank disappointment. For several weeks Mr. Templemore was on the unknown Mrs. Foster's track; then she suddenly vanished, and was found no more. Was she really Dora? He did not even know that; he knew nothing, he could learn nothing. If the grave had received his wife, she could scarcely have vanished more completely than this from

all knowledge of the living. No one had seen, no one seemed ever to have known her. It was as if the being who was so dear to him had lived for himself alone, for Mr. Templemore could find no token of her vacant place. To have vanished was for Dora to have been forgotten.

Wearied and disheartened, Mr. Templemore returned to Paris, and, even before going to his hotel, called again upon the high official; but that gentleman was out of town, and in his stead Mr. Templemore found a nervous little man, who knew nothing, who would say nothing, and who was evidently most anxious to get rid of his visitor.

He would place the matter in the hands of Durand; Durand was sure to know everything about it; Durand would call upon Mr. Templemore, and save him the trouble of coming again. Yes, Durand would be sure to call and tell him, even if there was nothing to tell. It was useless to insist, and though burning with secret indignation and impatience, Mr. Templemore had to submit and take his leave.

For two days he waited. But no monsieur Durand appeared. No letter, no message even, came to set at rest the fever in which he lived. On the evening of the second day, Mr. Templemore, who had not left his room, went out, but he could not stay away more than a few minutes. He turned back as eager as if he had been away on a long journey, and expected news on his return. He entered the lodge of the *concierge*, and looking at him searchingly, he said—

“No letter?”

“None for monsieur.”

“And no message?”

“None of any kind; monsieur,” added the *concierge*, looking injured, “has been gone three minutes.”

“I did not ask you how long I had been gone,” replied Mr. Templemore, with a sort of

fierceness—so the *concierge* called it—in his looks, which greatly affronted that dignitary. Unconscious, perhaps, of the asperity of his reply, Mr. Templemore went back to his apartment.

“I must renew the search on my own account,” he thought, as he paced his room up and down, “even though I fail again, and allow myself to be led away by a mere *ignis fatuus*; the search itself will relieve me, and this waiting, this suspense, is maddening.”

He had scarcely come to this conclusion when he heard a low tap at his door.

“Come in,” he said, with a sudden beating of the heart, that came from neither hope nor fear, but partook of both.

The door opened, and a low, thin man, with a bundle under his arm, entered the room.

“Are you Monsieur Durand?”

“I am, sir.”

“Have you found her?”

“I have not exactly found the lady, sir, but I bring some information about the lady.”

Mr. Templemore’s face fell. He wanted Dora. If they had her not, he cared little about their information.

Monsieur Durand resumed, composedly:

“Something was astray, too, and so I could not come at once.”

“What have you got there? What do you come to tell me?”

Mr. Templemore spoke hastily. This Monsieur Durand was hateful to him. He was a pale, thin man, with restless eyes, and as Mr. Templemore met their look, he could not help thinking that if, instead of seeking out the fugitive to bring her back to the fondness of a repentant husband, their task had been to hunt her down to shame or death, they would have done it without shrinking and remorse.

Whether Monsieur Durand guessed or not the feeling with which he was regarded by Mr. Templemore, he preserved his composure, and replied very calmly:

"An English lady in mourning, young and pretty, lived in a furnished room, let by the owner of a *bric-à-brac* shop, Rue de la Serpe. She was Madame Smith."

He looked at Mr. Templemore.

"Well," he said, impatiently, "Madame Smith has left the place, I suppose?"

"Oh! yes, she has left it. And after she left, a young Englishman came and inquired after her—a good deal; I suppose it was not monsieur?"

The blood rushed up into Mr. Templemore's face.

"A gentleman! what gentleman?" he asked sharply, for he thought of John Luan.

But Monsieur Durand's knowledge did not extend thus far. He shook his head—he could not tell.

"Well, and what about Madame Smith?" asked Mr. Templemore, after a brief pause, "for I suppose you have something to tell me."

"I have, sir," and Monsieur Durand began untying the bundle. He drew forth a woman's dress, black, but dreadfully rumpled, and he inquired "if monsieur knew that?"

"It is impossible for me to know it," replied Mr. Templemore; "that mourning—if it belongs to my wife—was purchased whilst I was away."

"And linen—would monsieur know linen?"

Mr. Templemore saw Monsieur Durand's hands fumble at something white.

"The mark will tell us," he said, eagerly approaching.

"Ah! there is none, unluckily," remarked Monsieur Durand; "look!" and he showed him that the mark had been cut out.

"Then how can I tell?" impatiently asked Mr. Templemore. "What are these things?—how did you get them?"

"I will tell monsieur directly how they came into the hands of the police; but I may remark, first, that the linen is fine, and that the

dress, though spoiled, is almost new, and was expensive. And now I will tell monsieur all about them. That Madame Smith to whom they belonged took the room in the Rue de la Serpe several weeks ago. She was in mourning; she spoke little and cried often. A week after taking her room she left it one evening, and never came back. Her trunk was empty, but her rent had been paid in advance, so her landlady had nothing to say. On that same evening, however—that is to say, the fifteenth of July, when there was a great storm—a woman in mourning climbed up on the ledge of the Pont de la Concorde, and leaped into the Seine. Three days later her body was found and taken to the Morgue, where it was identified by her landlady; and these," calmly continued Monsieur Durand, "are the clothes she wore."

On the evening of the fifteenth of July!—that is to say on the evening when he was at the play, when he paid for the diamond cross, when he travelled home through the storm to seek her!—on that evening this woman, who was supposed to be his wife, had committed suicide!

"It is impossible!" at length exclaimed Mr. Templemore. "I will believe anything else—that never! Take those things away," he added angrily, looking at the clothes, which had kept such strong traces of their three days' sojourn in the water; "and let me never hear of that Madame Smith again!"

"Then monsieur would rather not see the photograph!" said Monsieur Durand, leisurely tying up the bundle.

"What photograph?" sharply asked Mr. Templemore.

"Oh! it was taken after death, you know."

A cold fear crept to Mr. Templemore's very heart, but he would not yield to it.

"Show it to me," he said briefly.

Monsieur Durand fumbled in his pocket, and drew forth a photograph ten inches square.

As he first unwrapped and then handed it to Mr. Templemore, he said :

"It had gone astray ; and, to say the truth, that is why monsieur had to wait two days."

Mr. Templemore did not heed or even hear him. He stared breathless at that image of the dead—so cold, so calm, and so awfully like her, and the very beatings of his heart seemed to grow still. Yes, thus he had seen her sleeping, with closed eyes and half-parted lips ; but in another slumber than this. How heavy seemed this sleep ! The voice of love would never bid those pale lids unveil the bright eyes he remembered so well—never more would those lips smile half fondly, half shyly as he spoke. The head which a stranger's hand had placed on the pillow had sunk upon it in such weariness of all earthly things, that it could never be raised again. Life held nothing—no love, no voice, no aspect which could waken this slumberer from her charmed sleep. She was locked in it forever and forever.

Was it thus ? he thought. Perhaps not, but it was thus he felt in the first bitter agony of that moment. "O my God ! can it be she ?" he exclaimed, with parched lips—"can it be she ?"

The doubt following an awful certainty was a sort of exquisite relief. For this dead woman might not be Dora after all. A dreadful past, a bitter story, might have led her to a despairing death, and she might not be his wife. Perhaps even she was not so very much like her. Surely there had been nothing—nothing which could drive Dora to despair like this ? He looked again, but he was not calm enough to see well ; there was a mist in his eyes, his hand shook, he dreaded that fatal resemblance ; but his will, which was a strong one, prevailed and conquered that weakness. Once more he saw that image, and oh ! how he blessed Heaven from the fulness of his heart—it already seemed less like !

"This lady was older than my wife," said Mr. Templemore ; "older and thinner."

"Photographs make people look old," remarked Monsieur Durand.

"She was older than my wife," persisted Mr. Templemore, almost angrily ; "besides, I cannot trust a photograph—every one knows that light, that position, that the slightest accident can produce a complete change in a face, dead or living."

He looked defiantly at Monsieur Durand, who did not answer one word. He had not come to argue or to convince. All this was nothing to him. Opposition could have made Mr. Templemore vow that this dead woman had never been his wife ; but this cold silence threw him back on dreadful uncertainty.

"Is that all ?" he asked feverishly ; "is there no more ?—do you know no more ?"

"No more," laconically echoed Monsieur Durand ; "I went to the Rue de la Serpe to learn something before I came to monsieur, but there was nothing."

"What color was her hair of ?" suddenly asked Mr. Templemore.

Monsieur Durand looked annoyed. "Brown, I believe ; but they were very negligent, I am sorry to say—they took none."

Monsieur Durand said this in a tone which implied plainly that if the case had been in his hands, so important a link in the chain of evidence would never have been broken.

There was a brief pause, then Mr. Templemore said, "Take me to that Rue de la Serpe."

Monsieur Durand bowed, and said not a word. He was one of the modern slaves of the lamp, and to obey the master of the lamp—namely, the owner and dispenser of a certain amount of Napoleons—was his duty.

It is easy to deny ; but, alas ! denial is not always unbelief.

Mr. Templemore followed his conductor, and felt in a sort of stupor. Could his keen and anxious search for a loved and living wife, end

thus in the great gap and dark pit of Death? Could the tender frame which had been so dear to him have drifted helplessly down the dark river, with the chill waters flowing over that loved face, and loosening the long bright hair his hand had caressed so fondly?

There is an unreality in the death of what we love, which strong minds feel as well as the weak. Death was familiar to Mr. Templemore's mind, but not the death of a passionately loved woman. It was not a certainty yet, and he could not and would not believe it; but beyond that revolt and denial loomed a possibility which invested the present and every surrounding object with the vagueness of a dream. The living streets through which he passed had something abstract about them—they were and they were not. The roll of the carriages, the sounds of life, came from afar, and their din and tumult were softened by that distance which one thought placed between him and all surrounding things. He did not believe it, and yet he shuddered as he saw the swollen Seine flowing on to the sea, and bearing away with it to that great bourne, many an unknown human burden. If it were true!

They passed by the Morgue. He saw Monsieur Durand glance toward it. He looked at it too—with what secret horror! If it were true! If she had really rested there on one of those cold stone slabs which he remembered so well! O Heaven, was that the bed he had made for her! He revolted against the foul thought—he bade it defiance. In the name of the love which, though but for a few days, had bound them so fondly, he bade it begone. It was not possible that she had thus despaired of love and life—that she whom he had known so joyous, with a brave, warm heart and a living faith, had thus violently and sinfully denied both.

It was not possible; but he breathed more freely when they left the river behind them. They entered a narrow stone world, dark and

stifling, and yet seemed to come no nearer to the goal of their journey. At length Monsieur Durand stood still, and when Mr. Templemore came up to him, he said:

"This is the Rue de la Serpe, and yonder, where you see the *bric-à-brac* shop, is the house. Shall I go with monsieur, or does he wish to go alone?"

"I shall go alone. You need not wait for me, thank you."

Monsieur Durand bowed, turned the corner of a street, and vanished. Perhaps he did not go very far, after all, but Mr. Templemore neither knew nor cared. The setting sun filled the street with its level rays, and half blinded him as he walked up to the *bric-à-brac* shop. Oh! that the street had had no ending—that this goal had never been reached, if it was to lead to cruel knowledge!

The house was mean and narrow. Above the door dangled a yellow bill with "Furnished Room to Let." The shop was one of the poorest of its kind. Here were no rare relics of the past, each telling the story of a king's reign. No tapestry, no Sèvres, no Boucher and Watteau shepherdesses, no traces even of Revolution and Empire, or tokens of the East, in blue vases and gilt dragons, were there. Mr. Templemore saw nothing but the dingy, commonplace and dilapidated ruins of the present generation. Shattered mahogany chests of drawers, ruined card-tables, with the green baize half torn off, faded artificial flowers in common china vases under dusty glass shades, and showy little gilt clocks, abounded. But commonplace though all these objects were, they were also very dreary. They told of ruined and broken homes, and told it without the softening grace of the past.

Mr. Templemore entered the shop. A stont, middle-aged woman came forward, and asked his pleasure.

"You have a furnished room to let," he replied—"let me see it."

"This way, sir;" and leaving the shop in the care of a child, she showed him up a dark, steep staircase, into a small, gloomy bedroom, which, spite the heat of the day, felt strangely chill. Why are these places alike all the world over? Why do they all bear the same cold, homeless look, which, with every difference of climate and manners, we recognize at once? Mr. Templemore looked about him, but the plain bed of walnut-tree wood, the chest of drawers and toilet-table, told him no story. Everything was tolerably clean and dreadfully comfortless. He went to the window and opened it. Below him lay a small yard. The greenish hue of the stones with which it was paved told of habitual damp. A tall, miserable-looking pump stood in one corner. A few flowers in pots, withering for want of sun and pure air, had been placed near it, Heaven knows for what purpose. High walls dotted with windows enclosed this court, and made a well of it. Mr. Templemore shut the window with a slight shiver. Was it possible that her eyes had gazed on that dreary prospect? Had she lain and brooded over her wrongs in that wretched bed, until she rose on her last morning, resolved to end all that night? Oh, insufferable thought!

"It is a pleasant room, sir," said the *mar-chande* cheerfully—"nice and airy."

"Yet some people might object to it," replied Mr. Templemore.

"Why should they, sir?" was the prompt reply.

"You know my meaning," he said.

"Ah! about the poor lady. Why sir, she did not do it here. She was not even brought home here."

She spoke of it in a commonplace, matter-of-fact tone that sickened him. He could bear this no longer. He opened his pocket-book, and took out a paper, which contained a lock of Dora's hair.

Brief though Mr. Templemore's wooing had

been, he and Dora had, nevertheless, read together a few opening chapters of the long, fair book of love. One day, when he pressed her to importunity to accept a gift from him, and she refused, with the proud, sad question, "What can I give you in return, Mr. Templemore?" he had lifted up one of the locks of hair she wore tied with a blue ribbon at the back of her head in a nymph-like fashion, which he had praised once, and he had said, with a smile, "You could give me this." "Hair is too dear," mischievously answered Dora. Mr. Templemore, who knew that a lady's locks are not always her own, blushed. Dora laughed, and Mrs. Courtenay, untying the blue ribbon, let her daughter's long rich curls flow loosely, and at once cut off one, which she triumphantly placed in Mr. Templemore's hand. It was Dora's turn to look rueful, and his to smile. He had reached the age, indeed, when even an enamoured man does not think it a priceless boon to have a lock of a beloved woman's hair; besides, that bright head was almost his, and such instalments lose in value when possession is near and sure; but there is a pleasure in receiving the keys of a conquered citadel, even though its capitulation be imminent; and so, as he held this token of her subjection, Mr. Templemore looked at his future wife with gentle and not unkind triumph, and the lock thus won he kept very carefully—it was useless, but it was dear. Now, however, its use had come. That lock of hair might save him from long misery.

"Was her hair like this?" he asked, in a broken voice, and with a face so pale that the woman drew back startled. "Speak! Oh! for God's sake, speak!" he urged. "Tell me the truth, whatever that may be."

"I know nothing, sir," replied the *mar-chande*; "I never saw the poor lady. It was my cousin who kept the shop then."

"Your cousin, where is she? She must tell me—she shall!"

His looks and his tones had passed from grief to menace. But there is one with whom we must reckon in every human emergency, a grim keeper of secrets, whom no threats can terrify, whom no promises can bribe, and that one now chose to step in between Mr. Templemore and the knowledge he wanted.

"My cousin is dead, sir," said the *marchande*.

Dead! That woman whom he had delayed to question till the last moment, so much did he dread her reply, was now forever beyond his reach. He was baffled again; another dead woman stood between him and the truth; yet it was a terrible sort of relief to feel that he could not get at the fatal certainty; to doubt meant to hope.

"And so that was her hair," said the woman, looking curiously at the lock of hair which his passive hand still held; "very beautiful hair—I remember my poor cousin said so."

She looked both inquisitive and interested. He saw that the knowledge he so dreaded would be welcome to that woman. She wanted the mystery of that drama to be solved, and there would be a grim satisfaction to her in the knell of all his hopes. He hurriedly hid the hair from her sight. He would not trust her. In her wish to find a meaning to the sad story of the unknown dead, she might deceive herself and help to deceive him.

"I think it was chiefly by her hair my cousin identified the poor lady," continued the *marchande*; "I know it was beautiful hair."

Mr. Templemore heard her and was mute; the conviction and the hope with which he had entered this place were leaving him inch by inch. He did his best to keep them—he grasped them as a drowning man grasps his last plank of safety, and they would not abide with him. They floated farther and farther away on the dark and dismal sea of doubt. He did not indeed believe that the suicide and his wife were one, but then he was no longer sure

that they were not. He could not speak, he could not argue, he could not even hear this mentioned. He went down-stairs, and slipping some money in the child's hand, he left the shop without saying a word. He walked away, not knowing whither he went, neither thinking nor remembering aught beyond a ceaseless question, which ever rang within him like a knell, "Was it Dora?"

When thought returned to Mr. Templemore, he was standing on the quays, with the river, the bridges, and a distant prospect of church towers on one hand, and the verdure of trees on the other. The soft bluish mists of evening were abroad, and rosy clouds, still flushed with the sunset, floated across the sky. It was a fair and delicious picture, and yet Mr. Templemore felt as if it broke his heart. His fortitude seemed to give way every time he gazed on those dark green waters, and still he lingered near them. Gradually his steps led him to that bridge built with the stones of the Bastille, whence the dead woman was said to have taken her fatal spring. The palace of the Corps Legislatif rises at one end of the bridge, and at the other extends the Place de la Concorde, with its eight statues of the cities of France, its bronzed fountains, and its old Egyptian obelisk. The night was one of full moon, and it was both bright and calm. The reflection of the lights burning on distant bridges scarcely quivered in the waters of the quiet river. Mr. Templemore looked at it as he walked up and down the bridge, striving against the cruel tempter who ever whispered: "What if it should be true?"

It is strange how hateful senseless, inanimate objects can become when such a mood as Mr. Templemore's is upon us. Every time he came back to the palace of the French Legislative Assembly, and saw the statues of Sully, d'Aguesseau, l'Hôpital, and Colbert, who sit so calmly guarding its wide gates, a sort of wrath at their stillness and unchang-

ing attitude, at that peace of the grave which had been theirs so long, and now seemed transmitted to their stone effigies, rose within him.

After awhile he felt that he could not bear this any longer. He left the bridge and struck into that long avenue of trees which follows the course of the river. It was a green wilderness in the days when Anne of Austria was gay and young, and for her sake it is still called *Cours la Reine*. He went again over the evening's dreary story, and the resemblance between Dora and the photograph seemed to fade away as he thought of it. Was not Nanette's enamel like Dora? Did not the young actress recall her? What was there in that likeness, after all, that he should go through such agony? Hope grew stronger as calmness returned to his mind, bringing with it the greatest sense of relief he had experienced since his weary search began. It seemed as if by passing through this terrible doubt he had gained all that he had not actually lost.

At length he turned homeward. He passed by one of the *Cafés Chantants*. The little stage looked bright in the darkness of the surrounding trees. Three girls in scarlet cloaks were sitting, a fourth in blue stood and sang. "She is consumptive," thought Mr. Templemore, giving her a critical look. "Poor little thing, how long will she last, with those bare shoulders and the night air?" He had stopped for a moment; he now walked on, and as he thus turned away he saw a pale, stern face behind him—the face of John Luan.

"Pray bear the singer out," said the young man; "I should be sorry to interfere with your pleasure."

He got no answer. There was something in his aspect which sent a chill to Mr. Templemore's heart. It was as if his fate had risen from the darkness of the night, and now stood before him. They both remained a few moments silent, then John Luan spoke again.

"I come to bring you the news you asked of me two months back. I learned, no matter how, that you were in Paris, and I followed you for that."

Still Mr. Templemore did not answer, but he walked beyond the circle of the crowd, and John Luan followed him. When they stood alone near one of the gas-lights of the avenue, John Luan said:

"I bring you news of your wife, Mr. Templemore—she is dead!"

"'Tis false!" angrily replied Mr. Templemore, speaking for the first time.

"She is dead," doggedly said John Luan. "You have killed her—remember that. You took her to your house young, innocent, and happy, and you disgraced her—I know it all now—you robbed her of fair name, peace, and finally of life—remember that, I say! Your wife is dead!"

"How and when did she die?"

"That you shall never know from me. She died a cruel, despairing death. That much I can tell you."

"I defy you to prove it!" said Mr. Templemore, trembling with passion.

"I shall never attempt to do that," replied John Luan, with a cold, stern smile, "never. She has been dead two months, and two months I have known it, and I have not said a word, I have not made a sign. Did you think that I would help you, you her murderer, to happiness and liberty? Did you think that any assistance of mine would enable you to marry Florence Gale? No—she is dead, but you shall never be able to prove it. You shall never recover and enjoy your liberty. If you really doubt, you shall doubt on, and be thus chastised. And if you do not doubt, yet, as you shall never be able to impart your certainty to others, so shall you again be chastised. And thus," added John Luan, looking him steadily in the face, "I shall have my revenge."

"Your revenge, because Dora loved me!" replied Mr. Templemore, with much indignation. "If I did not think you half mad, Mr. Luan—for your language is not that of a sane man—I would tell you that my revenge for your malice will be to recover my wife and be happy with her. You say she is dead, and I tell you she is living! I tell you nothing shall convince me that she and the unhappy woman of the Rue de la Serpe were one. You see I am better informed than you think, and yet I am not convinced. I have seen the house, the room, the clothes, the photograph even of the dead woman, and I tell you, for your comfort, that she was not your cousin and my wife."

John Luan looked confounded, but he soon recovered, and said:

"You were not in Paris, Mr. Templemore, when she was taken out of the water, not very far from this spot; I was. You were away when she was brought to the Morgue; I was here, and I saw her. I saw her lying dead before me. I have known her from childhood, and I tell you I saw her. I stood behind the grating as she lay there cold and inanimate. I tell you I saw her. I neither claimed nor identified her—why should I set you free?—but I saw her. And now you may believe me or not—it matters very little. I am mad—am I? Good-night, Mr. Templemore."

He laughed scornfully, and walked away, and Mr. Templemore let him go. He felt stunned. Was it true? Had John Luan really seen her? Had he been mistaken in her identity—such things have been—or was it really Dora? Was that photograph, so strangely like her, the true image of his dead wife? And yet what is there in a likeness? Was not Nanette's enamel portrait, of a woman who had been dead two hundred years, like Dora?

"But not so like as this," thought Mr. Tem-

plemore, with sudden anguish; "besides, he should know her. Only he may be mad, or a liar; this may be a plot to deceive me."

Imagination is a tormenting gift. As Mr. Templemore walked home under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli, strange thoughts walked with him. It was no longer the great question, was Dora dead or living—but was Dora false or true? "Is this a conspiracy of that young man against me," thought Mr. Templemore, as he went up to his room, "and is Dora in it? Will they go away together somewhere, and, deceiving me and the world with a feigned tale of death, get married, and be lost forever?"

For a moment jealousy and wrath overpowered every other feeling. Reason was wrecked, and Mr. Templemore could only think, with impotent fury, of the hateful story he had conjured up. Dora, his wife, forsaking and betraying him thus! But suddenly his wrath fell, and was followed by a great calmness. How or why he thought of this he knew not; but he remembered how, entering his wife's room one morning at Deenah, he had found her praying. Her kneeling attitude, her bent face and clasped hands, came back to him, and softened him in a moment. She, Dora, his young, pious, and innocent wife, perjuring herself to commit bigamy with John Luan!

How could he think it, and yet remember how utterly John Luan had failed, and how completely he had succeeded with Dora? There is a strange sweetness in triumph; the wisest and the best are not insensible to it. Mr. Templemore felt moved and softened as the thought of the past came back to him. Yes, he had prevailed, with scarcely an effort, whilst John Luan, after patient years, had been balked. He had won the prize for which another had toiled; and she had been his, all his; too much his, for if he had thought he could lose her, he would never

have left her. She had been so easily won, that he had felt secure, too secure by far, and now he paid for his past folly by the tormenting doubts of the present.

For, after all, Mr. Templemore doubted. He had faith and hope, but no certitude. Even if his wife were not now sleeping in an unknown grave, he had her not, he knew nothing of the road she had taken, of the spot that held her, and, hard fate, he knew not how to seek for her. No mariner lost at sea, with neither chart nor compass, could be more at a loss than he was.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that something of resentment should mingle with these thoughts. For, after all, he did not think he had deserved to be so deserted, with abandonment so complete, and silence so scornful. Dora might have remembered their dignity, ere she had thus laid bare to the world the sad secrets of their married life. And thus one after the other the angry thoughts came rising slowly, but surely, like the waves of a sullenly wrathful sea, drowning in their tide tenderness, regret, and even the fair image of hope, till suddenly Mr. Templemore's eyes fell on the photograph. Monsieur Durand had taken the other things; this he had either forgotten or left designedly. Mr. Templemore took it in his hand, and looked at it. How like it seemed, and how the likeness grew as he looked on!

"If I could believe it," he thought, and his lips quivered as he said it to his own heart—"if I could think this image showed her poor dead face, and that unkindness of mine had driven her to such a death, life would henceforth be a blank page, one on which neither love, nor hate, nor happiness, nor enjoyment could ever again be written for me."

Many have said such things in the bitterness of remorse or in the first burst of grief; but how many have abided by them?

"God help me!" thought Mr. Templemore

in the agony of his doubt—"God help me! It is cruelly like her!" And still he held it and gazed on, and he could not put the image by.

CHAPTER LI.

THE light of a pale autumn sunbeam fell exactly on Mrs. Courtenay's face, and it showed very plainly that Mrs. Courtenay was frowning. A frown was a very unusual thing indeed on that lady's smooth forehead, and it required so ominous a fact as three successive failures of her favorite patience, to bring anything like it there. But nothing was incredible or impossible after such a calamity; and there could be no doubt about it—Mrs. Courtenay was frowning. She threw the cards down pettishly, and murmured with ill-repressed indignation as she looked around the room, "It is all Dora's fault."

The room was not a gay one, certainly. It was dull, meanly furnished, and it looked out on a bleak, bare field, with a lowering autumn sky above it. A pretty change, indeed, from the grave old splendors of Les Roches!

"I do believe the girl must be crazy!" thought Mrs. Courtenay—"as crazy as her poor aunt!"

Here Dora's voice singing gayly in the next room added fuel to the fire of Mrs. Courtenay's indignation.

"Garry Owen indeed!" she thought; "a pretty time to sing about Garry or Terry, or Jerry even!"

What Jerry had to do with it no one could have said, not even Mrs. Courtenay; but the three names certainly relieved her, for the frown was gone when Dora entered the room, in full song, as her mother mentally called it.

Dora had never looked brighter, gayer, or more cheerful than she looked now. Never in the hopeful days of her girlhood had she had a sunnier look than that which she wore

on this day. But for all her cheerfulness, Dora's cheeks were pale and thin, and gayly though she sang, her eyes were sunk. Perhaps, too, Mrs. Courtenay might have noticed or remembered, that, in the old happy days, Dora's songs had been sad—doleful, her mother called them—whereas now they were light and gay, when they were not actually merry. But Mrs. Courtenay was not a very clear-sighted person, and Dora's gayety now so far exasperated her, that she sat mute and sulky, and folded her arms in silent protest.

"What! can't you get on with the patience?" asked Dora in her lightest voice, and with a little ringing, silvery laugh. "Let me try."

She sat down and stretched her hand toward the cards; but Mrs. Courtenay took them up, made a packet of them, and deliberately put them underneath the cushion of the chair on which she was sitting; after which she looked rather sternly at her daughter.

Dora laughed again. She laughed very often now.

"What have I done now?" she asked, in her cheerful, good-humored voice; "come, tell me my new sin, mamma."

"Dora, I am very angry," solemnly said Mrs. Courtenay. "Why did you lure me away from Les Roches to—to this horrible little hole?" she added, suddenly raising her voice into her favorite little scream.

"Dear mamma," replied Dora, looking amused, "it was agreed we wanted a change—and you know Les Roches was a dreadful place, after what happened to poor Aunt Luan. And this is a lovely spot, and not a horrible little hole, as you very unkindly call it."

"Why did we not go to Ireland?" asked Mrs. Courtenay. "I have been very happy with my dear husband, and Paul and you, and even with poor Mrs. Luan, in Ireland. And it is quite absurd, Dora, that we should be living

here in this ridiculous little place, instead of being down at Deenah! Deenah was my brother-in-law's, and it is your husband's; and it is quite absurd that I should never have seen it, and more than absurd that we should be paying rent here, whilst there is a beautiful house doing nothing and waiting for us."

"Well, mamma, when Mr. Templemore comes and looks for us, we will go to Deenah."

"But Mr. Templemore is not coming, and he does not write, and you do not write to him," said Mrs. Courtenay, rocking herself to and fro in indignation and wonder. "I never heard anything like it—never, Dora," she added, with as much severity (and it was very little) as she could infuse in the words, "you have behaved very badly to your husband."

Dora seemed much amused, and shook her bright head, looking all the time like a merry girl who has been working some piece of mischief, and who enjoys it; but there was a strange, nervous twitching about her lips, even whilst she laughed.

"Dear mamma," she said gayly, "if he does not care enough for me to come and seek me, I cannot help it, can I? And it is no use being vexed or angry about it—he did not marry me for love, you know."

"And how does he know where you are?" angrily asked Mrs. Courtenay; "just tell me that?"

"He will find it out when he wants me," replied Dora, with a pretty toss of her bright head.

"Dora," said Mrs. Courtenay, with as much solemnity (and again we say it was not much) which she could convey into her look and manner, "are you getting frivolous? Why, you seem to have no conception of a wife's position and duty!"

"Dear mamma," gayly said Dora, "I was so short a time a wife! And I have always been light-hearted, you know. Why, Mr. Templemore said to me once, it was like sunshine to

have me in a room, I was so bright a creature. For, you know, he used to make pretty speeches to me, even though he was in love with Mrs. Logan all the time. And I suppose that sunny girls, if one may call them so, have no great depth of feeling. Another woman would fret and cry perhaps because Mr. Templemore is not coming. Better sing and be gay, as I am," added Dora, with her brightest smile.

"I never could understand you, Dora," said Mrs. Courtenay, looking profoundly puzzled; "never. You adored Paul, and when we lost him—" added Mrs. Courtenay, with a tremor in her voice.

"I was as gay as ever, after a time," suggested Dora. "Why, yes; you see, mamma, you are French, and I am Irish, that is the difference. We Irish," she added, looking very saucy, "are more Celtic than you are. And we are not half civilized yet, as the whole world can tell you. When we suffer we give a great cry, a terrible wail, like a keene over the dead; then we are gay and lively again, being, as the whole world also knows, a very merry people, light-hearted and light-headed. It is a dispensation of Providence, I have no doubt," added Dora, with a touch of irony; "but if I have my share of the national gift, why reproach me with it? After all, mamma, I suspect I am a more cheerful companion than if I had a solemn English grief or a decorous French one. Then you have the comfort of knowing that when I leave you, as I must this afternoon, I am not fretting my heart out, but just taking life easily and merrily."

"Yes; but I wish you would not leave me," said Mrs. Courtenay, a little pettishly; "what can you want in Rouen to-day?"

"Must I not see about money—money?" gayly asked Dora: "good, kind Mr. Ryan is not here to help me now—I must do it all myself, you know."

Still, Mrs. Courtenay was querulous, and wondered why Dora must needs go to Rouen; but Dora gave her a kiss, told her not to wonder if she did not come in to tea, and ran upstairs to dress.

"But she must come in to tea," thought Mrs. Courtenay; "I must tell her so."

But Dora did not give her mother the opportunity. She slipped down-stairs unheard, and bade Mrs. Courtenay adieu by tapping at the parlor window as she passed it on her way out. Mrs. Courtenay, indeed, opened the window, and called her daughter back—in vain. Dora had already turned the corner of the house, and did not, or would not, hear the summons.

"She is getting a very disobedient girl," thought Mrs. Courtenay, in some indignation. "I need not wonder she behaves so badly to Mr. Templemore when she treats *me* so."

But Mrs. Courtenay's wrath was never very long-lived. It gradually calmed down, and though she thought herself very ill-used, she took refuge and sought for consolation in a patience. But the pack of cards which she had so indignantly put away out of Dora's reach did not seem to Mrs. Courtenay a sufficiently lucky one.

"I shall do it for a wish," she thought, "and I shall take a fresh pack. If I succeed at once, it is a proof that Mr. Templemore will soon come and fetch us. If I have some trouble about it, as is likely, why, then we must wait, I suppose; and if I fail—" Here Mrs. Courtenay, who had risen, and was going up-stairs for the cards, paused, with her hand on the lock, and stood still in some perplexity. She was not one of your bold spirits, who will stake their all on one cast, and trust Fate with too much, so she looked for a third alternative, which should neither be success nor failure, and she found it in the evasive bit of commonplace, "If I fail, it is sure proof that Mr. Templemore knows nothing about it."

But about what Mr. Templemore knew nothing, or how he could possibly be ignorant of Dora's flight, Mrs. Courtenay forgot to say to herself, and quite triumphant at the loophole through which she had escaped destiny, she went up-stairs to look for her pack of cards. To her great annoyance, she found none in her room; she searched up and down, but no cards were to be got. Yet Dora had bought her a pack—it was only yesterday. Where had she put them? Mrs. Courtenay entered her daughter's room, a poor and meanly-furnished one. Mrs. Courtenay's heart swelled. Were this low bed, with its shabby chintz curtains, this painted chest of drawers, that dilapidated wash-hand stand—were these fit for the mistress of Les Roches, and the wife of Richard Templemore?

"She must be crazy," indignantly thought Mrs. Courtenay; "her Aunt Luan was mad"—they had heard of Mrs. Luan's death—"and Dora got it from her, and is crazy. But my mind is quite made up—I shall wait a while longer, then write to Mr. Templemore, and ask him what he means by letting his wife run away from him so. Now the cards must be in one of these drawers. I wonder in which?"

Mrs. Courtenay had a natural hatred of trouble. She tried to guess which drawer could possibly hold the cards she was looking for, but as none bore a label telling lookers-on its contents, she recklessly pulled one open, and began her search by a slow, careful survey.

Dora had taken very few things with her from Les Roches, a fact which, when she discovered it, greatly exasperated her mother. Linen, smelling sweetly of violet powder, now met her view; she closed the drawer pettishly, and tried the next. This held collars and sleeves, and a silk dress carefully folded. "One," angrily thought Mrs. Courtenay. She was closing that drawer too, when a little cas-

ket caught her eye. Were the cards in that? It had no lock, and Mrs. Courtenay opened it rather curiously. She saw some papers, and recognizing Paul's writing, she put them back with a dim eye and a trembling hand. Her step-son had been very dear to Mrs. Courtenay. Another paper, which she had taken out at the same time, fell on the floor. She picked it up. It was an envelope, on which Dora's hand had written, "The first and the last."

The first and the last! What could that mean? The envelope was not sealed, but it was worn, as if it had been used often. Mrs. Courtenay did not ask herself what right she had to pry into her daughter's secrets, she took out the two papers which the envelope held, and she read them both. One was a note which Mr. Templemore had written to Dora as Doctor Richard, the other one was that which intimated her mother's banishment. One was Hope, as she had first come to a dreaming girl; the other was Reality, as she had visited a sorrowful woman. And both, though Mrs. Courtenay knew it not, had been read daily by Dora since she left Les Roches. Daily she had gone back with one to the exquisite visions of the past, and daily, too, she had been led by the other down to the unutterable bitterness of the present.

Mrs. Courtenay remained with the paper in her hand till she could not see it for tears. Then, meek and subdued in spirit as in bearing, she put it back, and went down-stairs. But neither with the old nor with a fresh pack of cards did Mrs. Courtenay question fate under the guise of a patience. She sat in her chair, crying silently, and now and then saying, in a low, broken voice, "It was for my sake, my poor Dora! It was all for me!"

CHAPTER LII.

MR. RYAN'S advice concerning the shares in the Redmore Mines had been to sell out whilst they were at a premium, and Dora had gone to Paris for that purpose. The money had been placed in Mrs. Courtenay's name at a banker's in Rouen, and her daughter had therefore but to go and present a check to be paid. The transaction in itself could not betray her. Not that she cared for concealment; she neither sought nor shunned detection, but let events take their course recklessly. She saw no one whom she knew on her way to Rouen, and no one saw her; besides, her crape veil was thick, and protected her from the careless observation of strangers. But the check which Mrs. Courtenay had given her failed in some requirement, and the French clerk hesitated, and would not cash it. Seeing Dora's annoyance, he referred the matter to the head of the establishment; but he was out for an hour—would Dora call again? She said she would, and left the house to wander about the streets of that city in which she no longer had a home. She shunned Notre Dame and its vicinity, and went toward Saint Ouen. She entered the little garden around the church, and sat there to rest, and as she sat she thought: "We must not stay here. Why should we? He has forgotten me. I must abide by my fate, and remember that, such as it is, I have chosen it. We must go back to Ireland and live there. He has forgotten and put me by! I shall let him feel and know that if I gave my love unsought, I, too, can conquer, and, if need be, pluck it out, and yet live on."

She could do it, but it was hard. Besides, Dora had not expected this. Few women seem to understand that love, even strong vehement love, is but one of the many features in a man's life. And Mr. Templemore had so many things to think of! He had his child, he had his poor, his studies, and his articles of vertu.

Passionately though he had loved Dora, that passion could never have absorbed him for more than a time. He had not, indeed, borne his wife's flight with the scornful indifference she attributed to him; his search had been keen, his grief had been great, but perhaps he had given up the one in despair, and perhaps there was a weary lull in the other; for though she was so near him he had failed to find her. "He scorns me," thought Dora, with a full heart. "Well, I do not scorn him, but I, too, can be proud!"

But pride is a cold comforter, and Dora felt it. She felt, too, what we all feel at some hour of our life, that her sorrow was too much for her.

"What ails me?" she thought, with a sort of despair; "he has deserted me, allowed me to go my own way, what ails me, that I cannot forget him, but must remember and suffer on?"

What ailed her? Alas! this much: that life was impetuous and exacting, that love would not be denied, and that both were too strong for anger or pride. Still she strove against them. If she were not his wife, if he had but married Florence, she thought she would not care. But we cannot lie to our own hearts. From the depths of her being rose a reply:

"Do not say so; you know that it is better to have been loved a few days, than not to have been loved at all. You know that it would have been the bitterness of death to have seen him married to Mrs. Logan, even as there is something of the sweetness of Paradise in being linked to him. You know that if he has wronged you, his nature is too great and too generous not to do you justice later—and will there not be a foretaste of heaven in your forgiveness and that reunion? Think of what his repentance will be, and remember these days of love which he gave you—few, but perfect. Can anything annihilate them? Are

they not a portion of your life, the truest and the best? What though years should pass thus, in vain hope and expectation? A moment will yet come that shall crown all your sorrow, and conquer it, a time when you too can say to grief, "Where is thy victory—where is thy sting?"

Her eyes were dim with tears, but they were tears full of softness. She looked around her. The perennial charm of Eden seemed thrown over the dusty garden. The noisy children, the servant-girls, the gloomy mass of Saint Ouen, all vanished, and if they were seen it was with the thought—

"We will come here and study Saint Ouen, as he once promised me in Deenah that we should, and every sorrow and every wrong shall be buried and forgotten—and it will be Paradise—Paradise!"

Delicious was the day-dream, but very brief. Voices talking behind her roused Dora. She awoke with a sigh, but yet did not feel all unhappy. The gates of Eden were only just closed, and its sweetness lingered around her still.

"Now, where are they?" said a sharp irritable voice, a woman's in English. "Gussy, come here directly."

"I never heard anything like it," said another voice, feminine too; "how many weeks has his wife been dead?"

"Not merely dead, but drowned. It was her cousin, that stupid Doctor Luan, who knew her," says Florence. "Gussy, stay here. Do you think these Grays handsome?"

"Handsome! they have not got a nose among them all. I wish they would not stare so at Saint Ouen. I do think, like Florencé, that it is an old bore."

"How could she make up her mind to be a third wife?"

"Oh! it was she whom he was to have married, you know; only he committed a mistake, and took his daughter's governess

to church, instead of poor Flo.—I shall box your ears, Gussy!"

They now came forward, and stood in front of Dora: two specimens of the English feminine traveller and sight-seer, carrying a little stock of scandal with them, as the ancient journeyer carried his gods wherever he went.

"And is he married yet?" asked one of the pair.

The owner of Gussy smiled, and whilst that smile passed across her face, Dora felt as if her heart had ceased to beat.

"Not yet," she answered, "he went off suddenly in his wild way a few days back, and poor Flo is distracted. Miss Moore took scarlatina, and the child took it from her. She thinks he went for the diamonds."

The rest of the party joined them; they all moved on. They went talking and laughing all the way, and leaving a wrecked happiness behind them!

How often do we feel this in life! How often, when a heavy blow comes, do we think, "Ah! the rest was nothing! This was the crowning catastrophe, the shipwreck, the last cause beyond which there is no appeal." If she could but have doubted—but it was not in her power to do so. His name had not been mentioned, nor Mrs. Logan's, for Florence might belong to any one, and yet a certainty, against which she could not strive, entered her very soul and tortured it. He thought her dead, how or why mattered not—he thought it. There lay the full explanation of his silence. Alas! she had never thought of that. She had imagined that the voluntary forgetfulness of a bitter resentment weighed upon her. She had not thought that the cold oblivion of the grave already lay between her and her husband. He had forgiven her, she was sure of it now—her imaginary sins were buried in the mercy we extend to the dead. She was no more his wife, erring, indeed, but warm and living—she was

that something impalpable and unseen, against which we can cherish no resentment. That thin veil, so thin, but so chill, which divides us even from the most beloved, had spread between her and him, and so his love had returned—oh! what wonder!—to the fond, childish Florence, the chosen one of his heart, and, after a decent time given for mourning, they would marry and be blest at last.

This fair future she must now break. A second time she must be the cause of Mr. Templemore's grief. Perhaps this thought overpowered her—perhaps the consciousness that her death had been welcomed as a deliverance was too much for her fortitude. She did not faint, she did not even lose consciousness, but when the sense of reality at last came back to her, she saw that a silent and wondering crowd had gathered around her. She looked vacantly at a woman's face, and saying, in a cold, monotonous voice, "I was unwell, but I am well now," she rose and walked away.

As fast as her limbs could bear her, she walked through the streets; with the eagerness of a lover going to a trysting-place, she hurried to meet her bitter woe. If happiness has its fever, so has sorrow—a cruel fever, which drives us on and spares not. A presentiment, strong as a certainty, told Dora that she would find the confirmation of the fatal tidings she had heard on her aunt's grave, and it did not deceive her. Day was declining as she entered the cemetery. She passed through the wooden crosses, and stone and marble slabs, till she reached Mrs. Luan's last resting-place. Yes, there it was, written beneath Mrs Luan's name:

In Memoriam,

DORA COURTENAY.

This was her epitaph. No date of birth or death, for one was shameful; no record of marriage, for it had been ill-fated; nothing

but that name which was hers no longer, and yet was the only one by which John Luan would remember her. For it was he who had had that "Dora Courtenay" inscribed—he, and not Mr. Templemore, who had outlived her loss, as he had survived that of Florence, and had gone to get the diamonds for his third nuptials!

"Surely these graves ought to calm me," thought Dora, looking round her; "surely the dead, who sleep here so soundly, admonish me, if I but heard them."

But the dead were silent, or their voices were very low, for when Dora left them they had taught her nothing.

Her first words, when she entered the room where her mother sat, alone and sad, were, "How cold it is!"

"How pale and ill you look!" said Mrs. Courtenay.

"Yes—it is so cold," replied Dora, shivering.

"Dora!" exclaimed her mother, rising, "you must go back to your husband!"

"Go back to him!" impetuously exclaimed Dora.

"Yes, you must. I know all. I know why you left him—I feel sure he is broken-hearted—"

"Broken-hearted!" interrupted Dora; "do you know that he thinks me dead, that there is a talk of his marrying Mrs. Logan, and that I have just read my own name inscribed on poor Aunt Luan's grave? Yes, weeds are beginning to choke the flowers John set there, I suppose; but my name is on it, and Mr. Templemore is a widower, and he is going to marry Mrs. Logan."

Mrs. Courtenay stared confounded. Nothing could exceed her amazement when Dora told her all she knew, unless it was her indignation, when her daughter added, recklessly:

"Yes, it is so; and yet, mamma, I am going back to day to Les Roches."

"You are going to leave me!" cried Mrs.

Courtenay, and, leaning back in her chair, she gazed with a look full of dismay on her daughter, who stood before her very pale, but very calm.

"I cannot help it," replied Dora, with a quivering lip. "He has forgotten me; he thinks me dead; he is going to marry Mrs. Logan, they say; but, for all that, I must go. I am his wife, and when I married him I undertook to be the mother of his child. If he were with her, I should write and merely tell him I am alive, for, you see, I would rather not read in his face what he must feel on seeing me; but I cannot help myself. Eva is left to the care of servants, or to that, scarcely better, of Mrs. Logan. I must be true to the child, who was always so true to me!"

"Yes, and Mr. Templemore will come back and keep you!" querulously said Mrs. Courtenay.

"He may not come back before Eva is well," replied Dora; "and surely," she added, very sadly, "he has shown no wish to keep me, mamma."

"But I say that he will keep you," persisted Mrs. Courtenay, who was now in tears, "and then what is to become of me?"

Dora knelt before her mother, and, clasping Mrs. Courtenay's waist, she looked up fondly in her face.

"No one shall keep me from you," she said, with a smile. "If Mr. Templemore locks the doors I shall get out of the window. And I will come back—I will come back!"

Mrs. Courtenay looked down at her wistfully, but she still thought: "I know he will keep Dora."

Her daughter had no such fear. She had never felt very sure of her husband's affection, and since the great bitterness which had divided them, she had felt that his love was gone from her, never to return. There was pain, there was humiliation in the thought of now going back to his house; and Dora had said it truly,

she did it for the child. But Mrs. Courtenay thought, as she saw her depart: "She is still fond of him."

CHAPTER LIII.

The grayness of twilight was stealing over the road when Dora reached the gates of Les Roches. She had alighted and sent away the carriage that brought her at a little distance from the house; but short though that distance was, Dora felt as if her limbs could scarcely bear her thus far, and she had to pause and recover her breath, and compose herself before she went in. The gates were open; the porter was not even in the lodge. No one was visible, but, looking up, Dora saw lights in Eva's room, and in Miss Moore's. She went up the flight of steps and entered the house without meeting any one; but as she reached the door that led to the suite of rooms she and Eva had occupied before her marriage, it opened, and one of the maids came out with a light in her hand. At first the girl only saw Dora's figure in the gloomy passage.

"Who's that?" she asked, sharply.

Without waiting for a reply, she raised her candle. The light flashed across Dora's pale face. The girl saw and recognized her; for a moment terror held her mute, then, uttering a faint scream, she dropped the candlestick and fled down the staircase. Her cry roused Jacques, who was in the room she had just left. He came out as Dora, composedly picking up the candlestick, was going to enter her old apartment. Jacques' nerves were naturally strong, and had just then been strengthened by a cordial of which he and the housemaid had been partaking before Dora's unexpected appearance. On seeing his late mistress he looked bewildered and confused, and uttered a deep "Oh!" but when Dora addressed him, and said calmly, "How is Miss Eva?" Jacques was able to reply, though still with a wild stare

at this dead woman who had so unexpectedly come back to life :

"Mademoiselle Eva is very well—very bad, I mean."

"Is she conscious?" asked Dora, fearing lest her sudden appearance should agitate or over-alarm the child.

Jacques shook his head. It was plain that there was very little consciousness to be apprehended from Mr. Templemore's little daughter.

"Take that light," said Dora, handing it to him as she spoke.* Her other hand was extended toward the lock of Eva's door; but Jacques, with a boldness and freedom he had never shown before, stepped in front of her, and effectually checked her entrance.

"Mademoiselle must excuse me," he said; "but I think mademoiselle had better not go in now."

The blood rushed up to Dora's face, and dyed it crimson. It was not possible that her husband had given orders to deny her to his child. Her blush and her silence confirmed Jacques in his suspicion.

"I dare say that mademoiselle can see Mademoiselle Eva to-morrow," he continued composedly, and laying a slight stress on the word that proclaimed Dora unwedded; "but she had better not see her now."

"Where is Mr. Templemore?" asked Dora.

"Monsieur is away, and that is just it. He left no orders about mademoiselle."

This time Dora understood the insult. She reddened again with mingled indignation and shame; but she scorned to acknowledge the taunt, and it was composedly that she said:

"The master of the house has no need to leave orders about its mistress, Jacques. Let me pass!"

There was something in the flash of her eye, something in the quiet gesture of her hand, which Jacques, accustomed as he was to obey and to recognize empire, could not

disregard. Yet he struggled against the very feeling that made him step aside and give way to Dora, and with something like remonstrative sullenness in his tone, he said—

"Madame Logan is there."

Dora's heart sickened within her. This was her welcome home. Mr. Templemore's servants insulted her, and the woman he loved had forestalled her, and taken her place by her husband's child. But keen though the pang was, it was also brief; and her look as it fell on Jacques said so expressively, "What about it?" that the man replied in a tone of excuse:

"I thought I had better tell madame."

This time he thought it better to drop the offensive "mademoiselle." Without further parley, Dora went up to the sick-room. She opened the door and closed it again so noiselessly, that her entrance was not heard by Mrs. Logan. A look showed Dora that Florence was not alone. She stood at some little distance from Eva's white cot, talking to no less a person than Doctor Petit. The very man whom Mr. Templemore so much objected to had been called in to attend on his sick child! The light of a night lamp fell full on Mrs. Logan's pretty face, and showed it to be full of concern. She raised her little dark eyebrows, and gathered her rosy lips with an assumption of grave anxiety which might be yielded as much to decorum as to real uneasiness. At least, even in that moment Dora thought so.

"And so you are uneasy, Doctor Petit!" she said, with a look between perplexity and trouble; "really this is a great responsibility upon me, and I do wish that poor dear Miss Moore would recover, or that Mr. Templemore would return. Indeed, I wish both."

"My only uneasiness is lest my orders should not be attended to," sententiously said Doctor Petit. "Let my orders be attended to, and I answer for the result."

"Yes, but suppose your orders should not be attended to!" pettishly retorted Florence; "I cannot be everywhere, can I?—and the responsibility is all the same. So I do wish, I do, Mr. Templemore would come back!"

As she uttered the words, she happened to turn round slightly. Dora stood before her, silent and rather pale, but with all the signs of life about her. On seeing her, Josephine had uttered a cry of terror, and Jacques had looked bewildered and amazed; but it was blank dismay which appeared on Mrs. Logan's face as her rival thus returned from the grave to confront her. She stepped back, and clutched the doctor's arm, and gasped for breath, but she could not speak. Dora looked at her with sorrowful severity. She knew what feeling had brought Florence to Eva's sick-bed. It was not love for the child, it was not kindness or pity—it was the secret hope of winning back a past which her own act had forfeited—of conquering anew her lost lover, and perhaps, too, the master of Deenah and Les Roches.

"I am sorry to startle you, Mrs. Logan," she said, with much composure. "I believe a rumor of my death has been spread, and I can see that it has reached you. But, as you may perceive, I am not dead, but living, and on learning Eva's illness, I came at once.—May I ask, sir," she said, addressing Doctor Petit in French, "what you think of the child's state? I trust you are not uneasy?"

Doctor Petit did not answer at once. Mrs. Logan's agitation had struck him as very singular; he looked at her for some clue to guide him, but she had sunk down on a chair pale as death, and her emotion was unintelligible to him; so, looking at Dora, he said, point-blank;

"May I know whom I have the honor of addressing?"

"I am Mr. Templemore's wife, and Eva's step-mother," simply replied Dora.

Doctor Petit bowed, but looked more surprised than impressed—indeed, if Mrs. Logan's silence had not confirmed Dora's words, he would probably have looked incredulous; but as no denial came from that quarter, he was compelled to believe this stranger. As he had heard, however, that Mrs. Templemore had left her husband's house very suddenly, and as he had no sort of conception of the degree of authority which Mr. Templemore would yield to her, were he to come back, there was just a touch of polite superciliousness in his reply:

"I am uneasy—slightly so, I confess it, but still I am uneasy. Nevertheless," he added, turning to Florence, "I do hope, as I was telling you, madame, that, with care and attention to my orders, the child will do."

And he drew on his gloves, and looked for his hat, evidently considering Mrs. Logan as the person from whom he drew his mandate, and ignoring Mr. Templemore's wife.

Florence now roused herself from the stupor into which Dora's appearance had thrown her, and scarcely knowing, perhaps, what she was saying, she repeated mechanically her previous words:

"It is such a responsibility. I do wish, I do, that Mr. Templemore would come back!"

Dora looked from one to the other, and she thought, with much bitterness:

"I have deserved this. On the day when I left this house I brought all this on myself; then I must bear it—I must bear it!" So her look remained calm, and the tones of her voice were low and even as she addressed Doctor Petit, and said, "I am much obliged to you, sir, for the care you have bestowed on the child, and I hope you will have the kindness to continue your attendance."

"I shall call again to-morrow morning," said Doctor Petit, rather more graciously—"indeed, and spite the great distance, I have called twice daily, as madame knows."

"I am much obliged to you," said Dora again; "but you will not take it amiss, I hope, if I call in one of your brethren, Doctor Leroux, who usually attends on Eva, to assist you."

Doctor Petit looked as if he did take this very much amiss, and he said, rather stiffly, that he would have no objection to hold a consultation on Eva's case with Doctor Leroux.

"Though," he added, with marked emphasis, "I cannot say I think it at all necessary."

"That is not my meaning," resumed Dora; "I wish Doctor Leroux to conduct this case with you. And, indeed, on my way here I left word for him to call."

Doctor Petit looked astounded.

"Madame!" he said, with some heat, "this is inflicting a very unnecessary affront upon me. You must know that I can consent to nothing of the kind, and your proposal leaves me no alternative but to withdraw altogether."

"But you must not withdraw!" cried Florence, turning crimson, and wholly forgetting how painful she had found her previous state of responsibility, "I cannot allow it. I am answerable to Miss Moore for the child's life."

"And I to her father," interrupted Dora, with a slight flush on her pale cheek.

"Well, Mrs. Templemore," retorted Florence, speaking very fast, "you will acknowledge that Eva was not left in your care."

"Was she left in yours, Mrs. Logan?"

"She was left to the care of Miss Moore, and all I have done has been done with Miss Moore's wish and authority."

She spoke triumphantly, and Dora felt the force of the argument. Eva had not indeed been left in her care, and she did not know but her husband would resent her interference, even as he might be displeased with her return. But memory, crossing the bitter chasm that now divided them, showed her a face full of concern. To that she trusted.

"I acknowledge Miss Moore's claims," she said, answering Mrs. Logan, "but Mr. Templemore's are greater still, and I act in his name."

Mrs. Logan was going to reply, for having always plenty to say, and being troubled with no sense of dignity, she was not one to be easily silenced; but Doctor Petit interfered, and with a quiet wave of his hand, said loftily:

"I beg, madame, you will have the goodness to say no more. It is impossible, after what has passed, that I should continue to attend on this unfortunate child; but, in justice to myself, I must say this: she is now progressing favorably; if, therefore, any casualty should occur, I wish it to be well understood that the blame cannot rest upon me."

He moved toward the door, but Florence attempted to detain him.

"I cannot allow this," she said, "I really cannot. Miss Moore called you in, she is Eva's aunt, and she left the child in my care, and I cannot allow this!"

She spoke angrily and fast, but Dora said not a word to detain Doctor Petit, or to alter his resolve, and if he had the misfortune of being a very bad doctor, he was neither a servile nor a mean man.

"It is quite useless, madame," he said, addressing Florence; "I am not accustomed to such treatment, and will not tolerate it. Madame, being the child's step-mother, no doubt has the greatest and the strongest right to dictate on this matter; only I think I might have been treated with more courtesy?"

"I meant and mean no discourtesy," here remarked Dora, "but knowing what my husband's wish would be, I must obey it."

"I wash my hands of the result," said Doctor Petit, with a slight sneer, "and I have the honor to wish you a good-evening."

Florence saw him to the door, then came

back, her eyes sparkling with tears of anger and mortification.

"Well, Dora," she said, "you have again prevailed against me; but if this child dies, Mr. Templemore shall know that you came back to prevent her from being saved. How dare you 'do it'?" she asked impetuously, "how dare you do it?"

"And how dare you forget that the child is mine?" asked Dora, with a quivering lip. "On the day he married me he gave her to me. I asked him for her, and I got her. He gave himself too on that day, but if he has withdrawn one gift," she added, in a failing voice, "as I dare say you know, Florence, he has not yet taken back the other," she said, pointing to the little low bed. "Besides, I have another right. You had, perhaps you still have, the father's heart; but even you must confess that I have always had the child's. And now pray let this cease—let there be silence and peace about that poor little sick-bed. Let there be no bitterness between us. The two men whom I have most loved—my brother—my husband, have preferred you to me. Leave me the child, Florence—leave me the child. But for my aunt and you, I should be Dora Courtenay still. Remember that, and grudge me not a position and a name which have cost me so dear, that when I read to-day my own epitaph on poor Aunt Luan's grave, I wished it were true—I wished I were lying there with her, away from all the bitterness which made me leave this house, and which I find in it on my return. Remember Paul, Florence—remember him, and let there be peace between us."

For once Mrs. Logan was affected; for once Dora had found the way to her heart. Paul Courtenay's name brought the tears to her eyes. She had not loved him very much; but such as it was, this love of her youth had been the only disinterested affection of her life. It had not stood the test of poverty, but money

had not helped its birth. And Paul Courtenay had loved very faithfully. No second love had effaced her image there, and she knew it.

"Poor Paul!" she said, taking out her handkerchief—"poor Paul! I was very sorry for him, and it made Mr. Logan in such a way with me. But then you know, Dora, it is me"—Mrs. Logan did not care much for grammar—"and not you, whom Mr. Templemore should have married. You will acknowledge that, I am sure."

"She never liked him—never," thought Dora, looking at her in wonder, "or she could not stand there talking so to me, his wife."

But she did not think it needful to answer Mrs. Logan's strange remark. She had sat down by Eva's cot, and she was looking at the child. Eva's dark eyes glittered with fever, but she did not recognize her former governess.

"And how you can take the frightful responsibility you are now taking with Eva is more than I can imagine," pettishly resumed Florence; "besides, you really have behaved abominably to Doctor Petit. I am quite certain Mr. Templemore will be so angry," she added, raising her eyebrows, to give her words more emphasis.

Still Dora was silent. She was thinking what a difference Nature had placed between her and this woman. How one was made to float down the stream of grief, which nearly submerged the other. *She* would never have let her husband go, if it broke her heart that he should leave her; *she* could never have left his house, however much his indifference had stung her. If her folly led her into trouble, it would at least have saved her from such calamity as had fallen to Dora's lot.

"On one thing, however, I am determined," resumed Mrs. Logan, getting angry at Dora's silence, "that Miss Moore shall have the medical attendant she prefers, and that Mr. Templemore shall know the truth."

"You are very welcome," replied Dora, with such evident weariness of this conversation that Mrs. Logan became scarlet, and giving her an indignant glance, darted out of the room.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE door had scarcely closed on Mrs. Logan, when Doctor Leroux was announced, and shown in by Jacques. Dora's face lit on seeing him. It was a relief to escape from the bitter thoughts Florence had left after her. She went up to him and said eagerly:

"Eva is ill again; but Doctor Petit, who was attending upon her—"

"Then why did you send for me?" sharply interrupted Doctor Leroux.

"Because I know Mr. Templemore has no faith in him, and every faith in you; he has left me affronted, but I cannot help that; and where the child's life may be the cost, I cannot mind courtesy—nor will you, I trust, mind professional etiquette."

She spoke with some uneasiness, but it was causeless. Doctor Leroux was a rich man, and for etiquette of any kind he cared naught. His wealth placed him above the suspicion of wishing to secure a patient by unworthy means; and as he entertained a profound contempt for Doctor Petit's skill, and a high respect for his own, he made no scruple of taking a patient from him in the hour of peril. So without further parley he approached Eva's bed, and looked at the child. Dora read his face anxiously, and its gravity filled her with concern.

"Well?" she said at length.

"Well, it will be a miracle if we save her," replied Doctor Leroux, with some bitterness; and internally he added, "Petit's mark is upon her."

Fearful, indeed, is this power over life which the ignorant and unskilful possess, as well as the learned and the gifted, all the more fearful

that the guilty man is generally unconscious of his guilt.

Doctor Petit, whatever may be his name or his country—whether he command a ship, a forlorn hope, a company, or rule by a sick-bed, is our greatest enemy, if we but knew it. Ask the soldiers whose bones bleach on the battlefield, the sailors who have gone down with a despairing cry, the men and women whose homes are ruined, the mourners whose hearts are broken by the death of a loved one—ask them how they have fared through their trust in him, and be warned. The thief, the murderer, even, are less dangerous than the man whose claims to knowledge you cannot control, and whose ignorance you can only learn at your bitter cost.

At first Dora felt stunned; but rallying at length, she said:

"It is impossible! You cannot mean to say that the child must die, Doctor Leroux?"

"Not that she must, but that she may," he replied, somewhat shortly.

Dora looked at Eva. It was not and it could not be mother's love she felt for that poor little sufferer, and therefore hers was not a mother's bitter agony. But the knowledge that this little creature, motherless, and for the time, too, fatherless, was dying, pierced her heart. She had loved the child, and the child, too, had loved her. Eva had been a tie between her and her husband. She had brought Dora back to his home when nothing else, it seemed to her, could have done it—and now that gentle and tender bond must soon be broken. They would stand apart without that loving link, and they could not even meet by Eva's grave.

"He would not believe in my grief," thought Dora; "and he shall not see it to doubt it. When Eva is dead—if she must die, indeed—I shall leave this house again, and this time all will be surely over forever!"

But must the child die? It seemed so hard.

Doctor Leroux was gone, and Dora sat by Eva's cot, holding Eva's little wasted hand in her own, and she could not believe it. Oh! if there were but power in love to keep those loved beings who go away from us so surely, whether their leave-taking be swift or slow! "Stay with me," Dora longed to say—"stay with me, my darling! I never can tell you my trouble, but still you will comfort it. There is more consolation in a child's loving kiss than in all men and women can say to prove that one ought not to mourn. Oh! if I could but keep you!—if I but could!" And then to think that this tender little being must really die and be put in the cold damp earth, there to moulder away, with all its beauty prematurely destroyed, and the sweet promises of youth forever unfulfilled! The thought filled Dora's heart with pity as well as with sorrow. Every caress she had received from the child—every fond, endearing word which had been exchanged between them in those hours when Dora was no longer the governess and Eva the pupil, came back and inflicted its pang upon her. "I never could have left this house if she had been in it!" she thought—"never!" Then came the thought of what it would be when the child was gone—how empty, how silent, how cold! And so vivid were these images—so painfully real did imagination make them—that Dora grasped Eva's hand till the child opened her heavy eyes and looked wonderingly at her step-mother. She had no knowledge of death, and no fear of the destroyer. He might come and steal her away, and she would yield to him with the meek unconsciousness of her years. She would never suspect or know that there was a power stronger by far than that of the kind hand which now held hers.

"Cousin Dora," she said, with a suddenness that startled Dora, "when is Dr. Petit coming back?"

"What do you want him for, Eva?"

"I don't like Doctor Leroux."

But the words were spoken faintly, and she fell back into her old languor.

"The very child is against me," thought Dora. Her heart sickened within her as, remembering the strife she had already gone through, she foresaw another trial, more cruel still. What if, seeing matters through the bitterness of his altered feelings, Mr. Templemore should lay the death of his child to her door? He might not say it, indeed, but she would read it in his eyes, and would not that be hard indeed? "Since Doctor Leroux cannot promise to save the child," she thought, "would it not be better for me that I had never come here, or had left her to the other man's care? He said he could save her; and who knows—oh! who knows, perhaps he could!—perhaps it is true I am killing her!"

The thought was so exquisitely painful, that Dora dropped Eva's hand and left the side of the little cot. She went to the window, leaned against the glass-pane, and cried as if her heart would break. Two thoughts were with her, and either was very hard to bear. One, that there was little or no hope of saving Eva; the other, that, believing her to be dead, Mrs. Logan and her husband had indulged in hopes, felt or spoken—it mattered not—which her return must needs dispel.

"He believes me to be dead, and he will find me to be living," thought Dora. "He hopes to marry Florence, and he will learn that he is still bound to me. I am the bitterness and the clog of his life. The dark cloud, which ever comes between the sun of happiness and him!" As this secret voice spoke to her in such bitter language, Dora asked herself, with something like passion, why she was tried so cruelly. Why was her life a double burden—to herself first, then to him? And she felt so strong, so free from disease, so full of vitality! It seemed to her as if she could live forever. "I dare say I shall sur-

vive them both," she thought; "they will die, and I shall live on into dreary old age, forgotten by death, as I have been forgotten by love."

Bitter, indeed, was the thought, and nothing came to soften its bitterness. Eva was worse the next morning, and Doctor Petit pronounced Miss Moore out of danger. His verdict, indeed, might have been doubtful, but she asked to see Dora, and her appearance fully confirmed her medical attendant's assertion.

"Mrs. Templemore," said Miss Moore, with some energy, "what do you mean by tampering so with my niece?—what *do* you mean?"

Dora did not answer at once. She looked from the sick lady in her bed to Florence, who had taken out her handkerchief, and was weeping behind it, and she tried to say calmly:

"I did all for the best, Miss Moore—I followed, as I believed, Mr. Templemore's wishes."

"But it was to me Mr. Templemore left my niece," argued Miss Moore; "and you take advantage of me and my illness to get hold of her, Miss Courtenay."

"Mrs. Templemore," corrected Dora.

"Yes, I know you are his wife," impatiently retorted Miss Moore; "you need not taunt me with it."

"I mean no taunt, Miss Moore; but it is because I am his wife that I have a right over his child."

Miss Moore looked helplessly at Mrs. Logan, who had withdrawn her handkerchief, and was tapping her foot impatiently. Dora read that look very easily—it meant, "I have done my best, you see, but I cannot help myself." Indeed, Miss Moore's next remark was to that purpose.

"Well, Mrs. Templemore," she said, "I am not able to save poor Eva from you and that Doctor Leroux; but, remember," she added,

weeping, "remember, that if I lose my sister's child, I shall hold you guilty."

"I cannot accept that guilt, Miss Moore; life and death are not in my power, and I have still hope that Eva may be saved."

Miss Moore tossed restlessly in her bed; Mrs. Logan looked indignant, and, after a brief pause, Dora withdrew and went back to Eva. She had left Josephine with the child, and she found the girl inclined to remain and be communicative, especially on the subject of Fanny.

"Madame may believe me," she said, confidently, "but I never believed in that demoiselle with her blue eyes. I always told Jacques she was deceitful; and when she came back and said Madame Courtenay was dead, and took away all madame's letters and things, I said to Jacques, 'I do not like that; and I do not believe madame sent that Mademoiselle Fanny back.' Jacques will not grant it now, but I said it; and I never believed madame was really dead, for, you see, monsieur never went into mourning, nor never said a word. Only Madame Logan's maid said it to Jacques, who told me; but no one told monsieur, who went about looking so grave and so stern; but servants must be careful, as madame knows, and not repeat every word they hear. And I have always been discreet," continued Josephine, adding, with an abrupt transition, "I can make dresses too, and trim caps quite prettily. Mademoiselle Fanny took many a hint from me. For being English, you know, she had not the right-knack which we French have."

"Josephine wants to be my maid," thought Dora, with a sigh; "poor girl, she does not know my reign is over. I am still queen, of course, but where is my kingdom? And who and what shall I be in this house if poor little Eva dies?"

"She is thinking over it," conjectured Josephine, watching Dora's pensive face; "I did

well to tell her about trimming caps. Madame Courtenay always was particular about her caps."

And Dora, whose thoughts were far away, saw a sad image of herself going back alone to the poor house where Mrs. Courtenay was waiting; whilst Eva slept in her little grave, and Mr. Templemore brooded over his grief in Les Roches.

CHAPTER LV.

THE *concierge* in the Hôtel Rue de Rivoli was leaning back in his chair, and looking pensively at a telegram which lay on the table before him. It had been lying there seven days, and had not been claimed as yet by Mr. Templemore. Was this a second edition of that gentleman's mysterious disappearance? The *concierge* thought so, and was rounding off a period, when again Mr. Templemore spoiled his story by suddenly coming forward. A clew to the truth which he had not ceased to seek had taken him suddenly from Les Roches to a place beyond Paris, but it had proved vain, and he was coming to the Hôtel to spend the night there on his way home, when the *concierge*, recognizing him, rose, and said with much alacrity:

"We were afraid something had happened to monsieur. This dispatch has been lying here for monsieur no less than seven days."

Mr. Templemore's color fled as he heard him. Who could send a dispatch to this place, save Miss Moore, and what could she send it for but to give evil tidings of Eva? He tore the paper open with a trembling hand; but his heart sickened as he read it. The telegram was sent by Doctor Petit, and that gentleman informed him that Miss Moore and her niece were both ill of scarlatina; that he, Doctor Petit, was attending upon them, and that though there was danger, he hoped to get them through.

Mr. Templemore stood with the paper in his hand, stunned with a grief so unexpected. That Eva should be ill was ever possible, but that she should fall into the hands he most dreaded had always seemed out of the question; and now this dreadful evil had come to pass, and for seven days his child had been in the power of Doctor Petit. All might be well, or all might be over by this. Mr. Templemore asked for a railway guide. The last train left for Rouen at seven, and it was half-past six now. There was no time to send a telegram to Les Roches and receive the answer before the departure of the train. He must go at once, go with the agony of that doubt upon him, or wait till the following day to save Eva from Doctor Petit's ruthless hands!

Within ten minutes to seven Mr. Templemore was in the waiting-room of the Havre station, and whilst his eager eyes sought the hand of the railway clock, and his heart sickened with impatience, very bitter were Mr. Templemore's thoughts. Yes, all might be over now. Eva might be dead by this. The disease which he had dreaded most of all for her might have robbed him of his last child, as it had of her two little sisters. The enemy had come while he was away seeking for one who had all but replaced his child in his heart. "If I had been with Eve I should at least have saved her from Petit," he thought. "Oh! Dora! Dora! must you cost me so dear as this?"

There was a double agony in the feeling. Then swiftly other thoughts rushed through his mind. The mother whom he had given to his little girl had proved faithless. Alas! they had both been faithless, father and adopted mother too. Love and wrath had been fatal alike to Eva, and the innocent child's life must pay for a passion of which childhood has no conception.

Only a few people were waiting for the ex-

press-train, but amongst them was a young English matron with children, a nursery-maid, and a whole array of small baskets, and toys, and worrying parcels. Mr. Templemore walked to the other end of the waiting-room, in order not to see this happy group. That woman had four children, and he, who had but one, might soon be childless. There would be joy in her home for many years, while his might be hushed and silent. He was not envious, he wished her no evil, but he could not look on her happiness. The sight was one, however, which he could not escape. One of the children, a little girl, ran past him, to jump into the arms of a gentleman, who kissed her and joined the group. He was evidently the father and husband. "Why did I not meet Dora years ago?" thought Mr. Templemore, in the bitterness of his heart. "She would have been Eva's mother, and all would have been well. There never could have been unkindness between us with such a tie. And Dora would never have left her child's home as she left her husband's—never!"

These travellers made themselves at home, English fashion, and spoke loud and freely together. Tiny—such was the little girl's name—made daring attempts on one of the baskets holding biscuits. The nurse scolded, but Tiny, defiant sinner, only laughed, and throwing back her golden curls, got up on her smiling mother's knee and hugged her. The child was young and fair, wholly unlike the dark-eyed Eva; but many a time Mr. Templemore had seen his little daughter thus in Dora's arms, caressing and fond, and now, looking at this strange mother and child, he also remembered something that had occurred during his hurried journey from Deenah to Les Roches with Dora. Conquered by fatigue, he had fallen asleep one night in the railway carriage. When he woke in the gray morning Dora was sleeping too, and he found that, unconsciously, he had laid his head upon her

shoulder. Then, as the carriage still moved on, and he saw the deep purple plains in the faint light of dawn, the thought came to him how often his child's innocent head had rested where his now lay, and how often again, as he hoped, he should see her clasped to that kind heart. It had been one of his troubles to know that Eva would never love Florence, and now it was a joy to feel that he could hold these two, Dora and the child, in one love, undivided. He gently moved away, and Dora awakening, asked what was the next station. He told her, but he did not say how this little incident seemed to have given his brief married life some of the sweetness which only comes with years; and how this girl, who had been his wife but a fortnight, was already to him as the mother of his child.

Again Mr. Templemore felt he could not look on, and he turned his head away. He could not help loving Dora, whatever happened; but if Eva died, grief, remorse, and a child's grave would be between him and Dora, ay, even though she never left his side again. Could he forget that if he had not been within call in the hour of danger, she was the cause; could he forget that some strange woman, and not his wife, was now with his sick and dying child?

At last the wooden barrier was opened, and the travellers hastened to the row of carriages with the loud impatient hissing engine at the head. Five minutes more and they were in motion, first panting, then flying through the country. The suburbs melted away into a green landscape. The Seine gleamed, then disappeared, then came again to sight, villages were seen, then towns, then fields and orchards. Then towns once more in the autumn sunset, and still they went on, and Mr. Templemore thought they would never reach their goal. At length the hills which surrounded Rouen came in view, then the spires of the old Gothic city rose in the darkness of the night,

and Mr. Templemore felt he must prepare for the worst.

There were two ways of reaching Les Roches. Mr. Templemore chose the shortest. A carriage took him up a steeper path than the winding road which led to the château, and being unable to proceed any farther, left him within fifty yards of the wooden door in the boundary wall. Mr. Templemore paid and dismissed the cabman without a word. The man looked after him curiously. He saw him take out a key, and heard him open the door and enter, locking the door after him.

"They have their troubles too," he thought, making his horses turn. "They have trees and gardens, and houses, but they have their troubles too."

Swiftly, yet with the fear of death at his heart, Mr. Templemore went on through the dark paths. At length the house stood before him. It looked strangely quiet and solemn. Not a light burned in the windows, not one human being was visible. He stood for a moment waiting for some token of life, but none came from that silent dwelling. Suddenly, and as Mr. Templemore was walking quickly through the flower-garden, Jacques appeared with a lantern in his hand. In a moment Mr. Templemore stood by the man.

"Well!" he said.

He could utter no more. His lips were parched and dry, and fever sickened his very heart.

Jacques was slightly startled at his master's unexpected appearance, and there was just a moment's pause, an eternity of torment and doubt, ere he answered,

"Mademoiselle Eva is very low."

Mr. Templemore had tried to prepare himself for a worse reply than this, but by the agony it gave him he could test the vanity of all such preparation.

"Doctor Petit thought she was getting better," resumed Jacques, "and he cured Ma-

demoiselle Moore; but that was in the beginning, and Mademoiselle Eva is not so well now."

Mr. Templemore was standing perfectly still, like one incapable of sense or motion; but his eyes flashed when he heard Doctor Petit's fatal name, he started, as if that name had stung him back from torpor into life.

"My God!" he cried, "who brought that man—who brought him?"

There was something so desperate in his look and tone, that Jacques stepped back, and forgot his partisanship for Doctor Petit, which he shared with the whole household, in personal uneasiness. So hastily evading Mr. Templemore's question, he answered:

"Doctor Petit cured Mademoiselle Moore, and attended Mademoiselle Eva at first; but Doctor Leroux has the care of her now."

"When has he been?"

"He left five minutes ago."

Mr. Templemore put no further questions, but walked on. The fatal thought, "Petit has murdered her, and Leroux himself cannot save her—I have come too late!" rang through him again and again like a knell. He entered the house, turned into the school-room, thence into Dora's sitting-room, and went up the private staircase which led to the apartment Eva had once shared with her governess.

He pushed the door of the child's room open very softly. He did not wish her to be startled by his sudden appearance. The night lamp shed a dull faint light in the sick-room, a low wood fire smouldered on the hearth, but Mr. Templemore could see Eva's little white cot at the other end of the apartment. He approached it gently. A calm, regular breathing told him the child was sleeping. He bent over her very cautiously. Long, keen, and attentive was the look. Suddenly Eva's eyes opened. Mr. Templemore remained perfectly still. She looked at him with a half

wondering gaze, in which sleep contended; then her lids fluttered and fell, her eyes closed, and she was sleeping soundly. With a relieved sigh Mr. Templemore turned away. Eva was saved, and he knew it.

"Thank God!" he said, half aloud—"thank God!"

He walked towards the fireplace, then stood still. A flickering ray of the firelight shot up from the hearth; and pale, worn, and altered though she was, he saw and knew her. This was his wife who stood before him! For a moment his heart seemed to cease to beat. For a moment he stood, pale as death, and as silent. For a moment she, too, was mute and still, looking at him as he looked at her. But she had been expecting him days, and she recovered first. She raised a warning hand.

"Do not waken her," she said in the lowest whisper—but low though it was, her voice shook; "she is saved—she will live!"

Great joys come to us like great sorrows. Mr. Templemore could neither move nor speak—he felt stunned. He had got them both back—the wife and the child, and for a while he could only look at his lost Dora's face.

"My wife!—my dear wife!" he said at length.

He took her in his arms. The word "wife" was a sesame. No term of endearment had ever sounded half so sweet as this, when he had spoken it, in the past; and as he uttered it now her whole heart seemed to go forth to meet him. When he opened his arms to receive her, she threw hers around his neck, and all was forgiven and forgotten forever between these two.

"Then you are glad I am not dead," she said, smiling through her happy tears; "you never had that cruel 'Dora Courtenay' put on poor aunt's grave?—you never wished to marry Mrs. Logan? You need not tell me so. I know it—I know it!"

Yes, this was truly Dora—Dora jealous and

fond, and Dora joyous and light-hearted. Dora who had fled from him in hasty resentment, and had come back on the first token of the child's peril. But great joy is incredulous. The cruel fear of Eva's danger was but a few hours old. It had not taken upon him the hard grasp of reality. He could bid it begone like an evil nightmare; but the doubts, the fears, the anguish he had gone through in seeking the woman whose voice he heard, whose hand he held, all came back to him now, and seemed to say, "Do not be too sure—you may be dreaming, and when you waken she may be gone."

"I cannot believe it!" he exclaimed vehemently—"I cannot believe I have got you back!"

"And yet I am no ghost!" she answered joyously.

Ah! but how pale and worn she looked! She had been watching many nights, surely?

"Four," she answered simply. "I did not dare to leave Eva for fear they should bring back Doctor Petit."

"You brought Leroux, then?"

"I did. I had a hard battle, but I won."

"And Petit would have killed her. She is now your child, indeed!"

There are some sweet drops in this bitter cup of life, as the poets call it.

"I am sure of him now," thought Dora—"sure forever."

Eva moved slightly. At once Dora was by her side; but Eva was only dreaming. Dora raised the curtain and bent over the sleeping child to make sure of her slumber; and Mr. Templemore looked at them both, and never forgot that picture—the poor little head on its white pillow, and the faithful, tender face above it.

CHAPTER LVI.

MR. TEMPLEMORE had sent Dora to her room to rest and sleep, and Dora had obeyed him.

It was sweet to go and rest after fatigue, and to sleep after watching, and sweeter than all to know she was doing both in her husband's house, and under her husband's care.

She looked around her with a delicious sense of home. How pleasant to sit down in that large arm-chair, and rest a while, and think of her husband, surrounded as she was with tokens of her husband's affection! How pleasant, after the vexing storms of the past, to rejoice in the sweet peace of the present! The same sense of repose followed her when she at length laid her head on her pillow, and composed herself to sleep.

"Adieu to care," she thought. "If our love has survived such bitter trials, surely we need not fear for it. We are mortal, and, therefore, may suffer again, for we cannot conquer sickness and death; but for all that, adieu to care! Now I can fall asleep and not dread wakening. And to-morrow I can waken, and not feel in my heart, 'Another bitter day lies before me.' I know that Eva will live—I know that he sits with her thinking of me—I know that the delightful days are all coming back like spring after winter."

Yes, she knew it, and when she ceased to know it—when Thought folded her wings, and a gentle torpor crept over her—when fatigue and happiness both wrapped her in a delightful heaviness, and made her close her eyes—she felt it still. It was the last consciousness she carried with her into the world of sleep—it was the meaning of all her dreams, and her bright welcome when she woke.

Whilst Dora slept, Mr. Templemore sat up and watched in Eva's room. He had sat down in Dora's vacant chair by the fire-place, and looking at the red embers, he threw off the weary burden of the past, and indulged in some bright dreams. But suddenly the image of Florence, pale and reproachful—Florence, who had wronged him, but whom he had abetted too willingly, came back like an up-

braiding. How completely he had given up the old love, and how eagerly he had turned to the new! Was not this vehement affection the justification of Mrs. Logan's jealousy? "Yes," he thought, with something like remorse, "she was right enough. I was always too fond of Dora. I always gave her too much, and now she has all, and she has a right to all. The folly of a silly woman and the guilt of a mad one have made it too late for repentance or regret. Then why perplex myself with what might have been, but never can be?—why grudge myself the happiness of what it is, when that 'is' happens to be a girl I love, and a young wife like Dora?"

Thus spoke Reason, and Conscience lent her a very willing ear, and Remorse retreated discomfited, and in some disorder. An unexpected ally, moreover, came to Reason's aid, and made her mistress of the field.

Dora had not long been gone, for thought travels fast, when the door through which she had left opened gently. Mr. Templemore looked quickly round. He had scarcely time to recognize Miss Moore's square figure, when he heard her lock the door, and take out the key; then, crossing the room swiftly, she went to another door and locked that too. He stared at her in silent amazement, but it was plain Miss Moore did not see him. She went to Eva's bed, peeped cautiously at the child, then walked away on tiptoe, took a large, old-fashioned arm-chair, shook the cushion upon it, wheeled it to Eva's cot, then sat down, with a gentle sigh of relief, took off her curls, fumbled in her pocket, brought out a white-filled night-cap and put it on. She was tying the strings, when, to her mingled terror and confusion, Mr. Templemore appeared before her. Miss Moore felt petrified, and so she did not scream; but when Mr. Templemore, who did not want to waken the child, made a sign that she was to rise, Miss Moore mechanically obeyed, and found strength

to do so. He took a light, and she followed him to the neighboring room.

"Miss Moore," he inquired, when they were out of Eva's hearing, "may I ask the meaning of this?"

"I—I want to sit up with Eva," stammered Miss Moore; "I thought she was alone."

"What made you think so?—did you see my wife leave?"

"Yes—just so. I saw her leave, and I came to sit up with the child."

"Miss Moore, why did you lock the door?"

Miss Moore was mute.

"It is not possible," he said, rather bitterly, "that you meant to lock out my wife?"

"I—I don't know," was Miss Moore's piteously reply.

It was plain that such had been her intention; but Mr. Templemore did not think Miss Moore capable of originating so rebellious a scheme, and his eyes flashed with resentment, as he said:

"Who advised this? Of course you would never have done it?"

Miss Moore turned traitor without remorse.

"It was Mrs. Logan," she said.

"Mrs. Logan! Good Heavens! what could be her motive? What could make her wish to insult my wife in her own house? And, Miss Moore, how could you abet her?"

"I have a right over Eva," jealously replied Miss Moore; "she is my sister's child after all, and I have no faith in Doctor Leroux; and Doctor Petit cured me, Mr. Templemore."

Mr. Templemore felt too indignant to argue that point; but he said again:

"But Mrs. Logan has no right—how dare she meddle?—how dare she advise you so, Miss Moore?"

"I suppose it vexed her that Mrs. Templemore should be alive," composedly said Miss Moore; "you see, she thought that you were a widower, I suppose, when she came to mind Eva and me."

Mr. Templemore heard her with mingled anger and shame. Not a shadow of remorse or regret could remain in his heart after this. "And I have loved this small, silly, selfish creature," he thought, in mute indignation; "this ruthless little thing, who would have sacrificed my child's life as well as her own pride to indulge a moment's revenge!"

He could not speak at once, so bitter were his feelings; and that bitterness showed itself in the first words he uttered:

"Miss Moore, Dora must never know this—never, mind you. She must never know that this insult was contemplated."

Miss Moore was quite willing to vow that she would never tell Mr. Templemore's wife the little plot that had been concocted against her. And though she had been faithless to Mrs. Logan, she was strictly faithful to herself. Dora never did know it. She never knew why, when her husband spoke of Florence, which was but rarely, he spoke of her with such bitter emphasis and such resentful looks. She never knew why, when a year after this, Mr. Templemore heard of Mrs. Logan's marriage with a learned Judge, he uttered so serious and earnest a "poor fellow!"

"But you might have been that 'poor fellow,'" gayly said Dora.

"Never," he rather sharply answered. "I have committed some mistakes, but they have never been fatal ones. Either reason resumed her sway at the critical moment, or," he added, smiling, "some good fairy came to the rescue when all seemed lost. So you see that I never could have been that 'poor fellow!'"

"I see," thought Dora; "there is something I have never known; but I am not Blue Beard's wife—I can bear it."

But all this was yet to come. When Dora entered Eva's room the next morning, so bright and joyous that Mr. Templemore told her she looked like the sunbeam whom the alchemist caught and imprisoned:

"Then mind you lock me up, or I shall escape," replied Dora; "do not trust me—do not trust me."

Alas! Mrs. Courtenay's worst presentiments were being fulfilled. Mr. Templemore wanted to keep her, and Dora wanted to stay. "Yes," thought Mrs. Courtenay, as she sat alone and sad, and looked out at the village street, "I knew how it would be."

This time Mrs. Courtenay was not frowning. Dora's mother was weeping, gently, indeed, not with a bitter or passionate flow, but still with sorrow and heartache. Dora had been gone, oh! so long, and she was not returning. She wrote frequently, almost daily; but she did not come back. Mrs. Courtenay knew how ill Eva had been, and how well she was getting. She knew that Mr. Templemore had come back, and that Dora was, as she said, happier than ever; but when Dora would come to her, or if ever she would come, Mrs. Courtenay did not know. And thus, though the cards lay before her, though the favorite patience of his majesty Louis XVIII. had come out beautifully, Mrs. Courtenay was gloomy, and indulged in some reflections more philosophic than cheerful. "I have always read in history," sadly thought the poor lady, "that when two contending powers made peace, it was at the expense of a third, some poor little weak kingdom or dukedom, or republic, which they either divided or sacrificed in some dreadful way or other. And that is how Dora and Mr. Templemore are now acting. Of course I cannot be divided, or made three pieces of, like poor Poland, but then I can be excluded from the confederation, as it were, and told to mind my own business, and let the mighty people settle their own affairs. Dora is a good daughter, and she loves me very dearly, but then she is crazy about her husband, and, of course, he is desperately fond of her, and they are making a new honeymoon of it. And, of course, too, I must be sacrificed. I always thought Doctor

Richard looked like a jealous man, and I do believe he will lock her up rather than let her be out of his sight. And if he does, how can she help herself, poor dear!"

Yet it was a hard case, a very hard case, but it was of a piece with that carrying off of the Sabines which Mr. Templemore had emulated on his wedding-day. "It began then, and it is ending now," thought the poor lady. "I have lost my Dora!"

Mrs. Courtenay was sitting in the parlor, looking disconsolately at the sunburnt road through the green screen of vine-leaves which framed her window, as she came to this lamentable conclusion. The cards lay before her, and a red glow from the west stole in and filled the plain room with warmth and light. Mrs. Courtenay was dazzled as well as miserable, and leaning back in her chair with a sigh, she closed her wearied eyes with the dismal reflection, "Where is the use of looking?"

"Mamma! mamma!" said a pleasant voice, which sounded in her ear. Mrs. Courtenay started and looked round. She was alone in the room. "I am here," said the voice again; and this time Mrs. Courtenay, turning in the direction whence the voice came, saw Dora's bright face looking at her laughingly through the vine-leaves. "You have been crying," said Dora, putting on a frown. "I see it. I am very angry!"

"Don't!" implored Mrs. Courtenay, deprecatingly.

Dora shook her head, then vanished. The next moment she was in the room, and she stood before her mother with a grave face and a threatening forefinger.

"I told you I would come back, but you did not believe it, and yet here I am."

"Yes," said Mrs. Courtenay, admiringly; "and how well and how pretty you look, Dora! How did you get away?" she asked, as Dora sat down by her, and kissed her heartily.

"Did I not tell you I would get out through the window?" gayly replied Dora.

"Oh! but I hope you did not," exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay in some alarm. "That would never do, Dora. Mr. Templemore would not like it."

Dora looked a little defiant.

"Why did he lock the door?" she asked.

Mrs. Courtenay clasped her hands.

"And did he lock the door?" she cried. "Dora, that was disgraceful; but you should have procured another key, and not jumped out of the window!"

"My dear Mrs. Courtenay, do not believe her," now said the voice of Mr. Templemore, who had been standing behind her chair all the time. "The doors of Les Roches were wide open, but Dora was so unwilling to come that I had to bring her to you."

"That is pure slander, you know, mamma," composedly said Dora, "and you know better."

Mrs. Courtenay was a little flurried by Mr. Templemore's sudden appearance, but she promptly recovered, and her first words were an inquiry after Eva.

"Eva is very well, thank you, but we do not leave her long alone, and you will not take it unkindly, my dear madame, if we ask you to come away with us—almost at once."

He spoke with his old kindness and courtesy. Mrs. Courtenay looked at him and at her daughter, and her lips parted to say—

"Mr. Templemore you did not want me in your house, and I will not return to it," but for Dora's sake she was mute. "They shall never guess that I know it—" she thought—"never. I, too, shall have my secret and my burden, but my dear Dora shall be happy—quite happy—if I can make her so!"

"I shall soon be ready," she replied meekly.

"Let me pack up for you," gayly said Dora.

She rose and went up-stairs, and her first act was to look for, and burn Mr. Templemore's letter. As it shrivelled up before her,

she smiled triumphantly. Thus all bitterness, all unkindness would perish and pass away from their two lives. She soon came down again.

"We are ready," she said to her husband.

The carriage which had brought them from the railway-station was at the door waiting. Mrs. Courtenay allowed her daughter to put on her bonnet and shawl without a word. Still meek and silent she entered the carriage, and she scarcely opened her lips during the journey to Les Roches. Dora noticed this, and she said a little jealously as they went up the stone steps that led to the house:

"Well, are you not pleased to be home again?"

"Yes, my dear, very much pleased," meekly replied Mrs. Courtenay; but night had set in, and it was well that Dora did not see her mother's face. Mrs. Courtenay said she was tired, and she went up to her room.

"Mr. Templemore will want Dora all to himself," she thought, with a swelling heart; "I must not be in the way."

The room was a pleasant room, and Mrs. Courtenay looked around it drearily. She felt chill, and she had asked for a fire; but though the logs burned and crackled cheerfully on the hearth, Mrs. Courtenay felt miserable. These two, her daughter and son-in-law, were happy below without her. Yes, remembering her own early-married days, she could imagine how it was with them. During the journey home Mr. Templemore had alluded to one of his Eastern wanderings, and to some sketches he had made of the ruined cities which lie beyond the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee.

"Why did you never show them to me?" asked Dora quickly

And Mr. Templemore had answered—

"You shall see them this evening."

So it was not difficult for Mrs. Courtenay to imagine how these two were now engaged.

She could hear Mr. Templemore's voice and Dora's soft laugh; and she could see, too, Dora's wondering bright eyes raised to her husband's face, and his smile half amused, half fond, for he was very fond of her indeed, fonder than ever, it seemed to Mrs. Courtenay, and of course they did not want, they did not miss her.

"Poor Mrs. Luan," thought Mrs. Courtenay, with a sigh, "if I had her still I should not feel so dull and lonely." A little rap at the door here roused the solitary lady from her reflections. "I wish Mr. Templemore's servants would not come and pester me," crossly thought Mrs. Courtenay.

The little rap was repeated, the door opened, and a curly head peeped in, and a childish, treble voice said, "Please, it's only me. May I come in, Mrs. Courtenay?"

"Come in, my dear," said Mrs. Courtenay, brightening up as she saw Eva. "Well, what is it?—what do you want?" she added, as the child came forward.

"I came to see you," replied Eva, half offended at this welcome.

"Thank you, my dear," soothingly answered the elder lady; "I am very much obliged to you. Sit down."

Eva climbed up on a chair, looked at the fire, then burst out with the angry ejaculation:

"Papa doesn't mind me a bit since Cousin Dora came back!"

"My dear, you must not say Cousin Dora now—"

"Yes, yes, I know," impatiently interrupted Eva; "but one can't get used to it all at once, you know."

She was flushed, and looked anything but satisfied. "Dear, dear," thought Mrs. Courtenay uneasily, "I hope the child is not going to be jealous of poor Dora!"

"Papa is showing Cousin Dora all his beautiful sketches," continued Eva, warming with the sense of her wrongs.

"My love, there is no harm in that," said Mrs. Courtenay, trying to excuse the sinner.

"Oh! no," replied Eva, "but when Cousin Dora wanted to take me on her knee papa would not let her. So I came up to you, Mrs. Courtenay."

It was plain Eva was offended, not so much with Dora as with her father; and it was plain, too, that, fond as he was of his little daughter, Mr. Templemore did not object to being alone with his young wife. Yes, matters were going on below pretty much as Mrs. Courtenay had conjectured. Mr. Templemore and his wife were sitting side by side in his study, bending over a large portfolio. Dora looked with wonder at a graphic sketch of a deserted city. She saw a street with stone houses, and on a rocky peak a lonely temple rising against the sky. It was very impressive, but it was melancholy. Mr. Templemore told her that a fox scampered out of the house on the right when he entered it, and that two jackals had made their lair in the temple on the left.

"I do not like it," said Dora; "I cannot fancy having a fox in this room when we are dead, or rabbits instead of jackals, which the climate does not allow, about the place. Do you, Eva?" But Eva was gone.

"You would not let me take her on my knee," remorsefully said Dora, "and Eva is affronted. I did not even see her go. Mamma told me so: 'You will want no one when you are again with Mr. Templemore.'"

Mr. Templemore was vexed. What ailed his mother-in-law and his child that they would not let him enjoy his newly-found happiness? Still he wanted to know where Eva was, and Dora suggested that she might be with Mrs. Courtenay. They both went up-stairs to look. Eva had forgotten to shut the door of Mrs. Courtenay's room. A broad ray of light shone out on the landing, and guided too by the sound of voices, Mr. Templemore and his wife peeped in unseen.

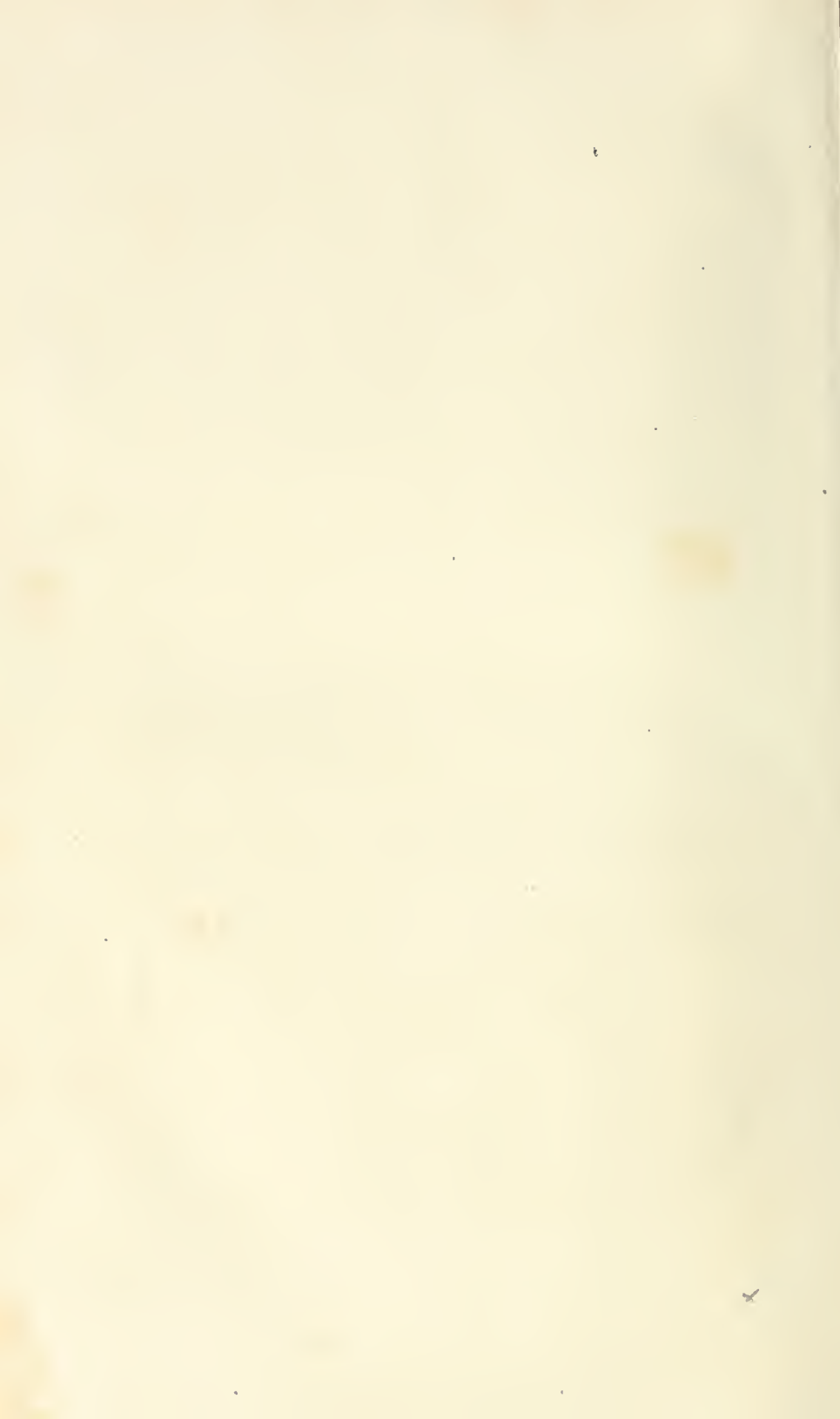
Mrs. Courtenay had spread out the cards on the table, and was giving Eva a lesson in the favorite patience of his majesty Louis Dix-huit. Eva, perched on a high chair, looked on intently, puckering her little brown face into an expression of the utmost gravity. Suddenly she clapped her hands and uttered a joyous cry: "You have done it!"

"I have!" said Mrs. Courtenay, in great glee—"I have!"

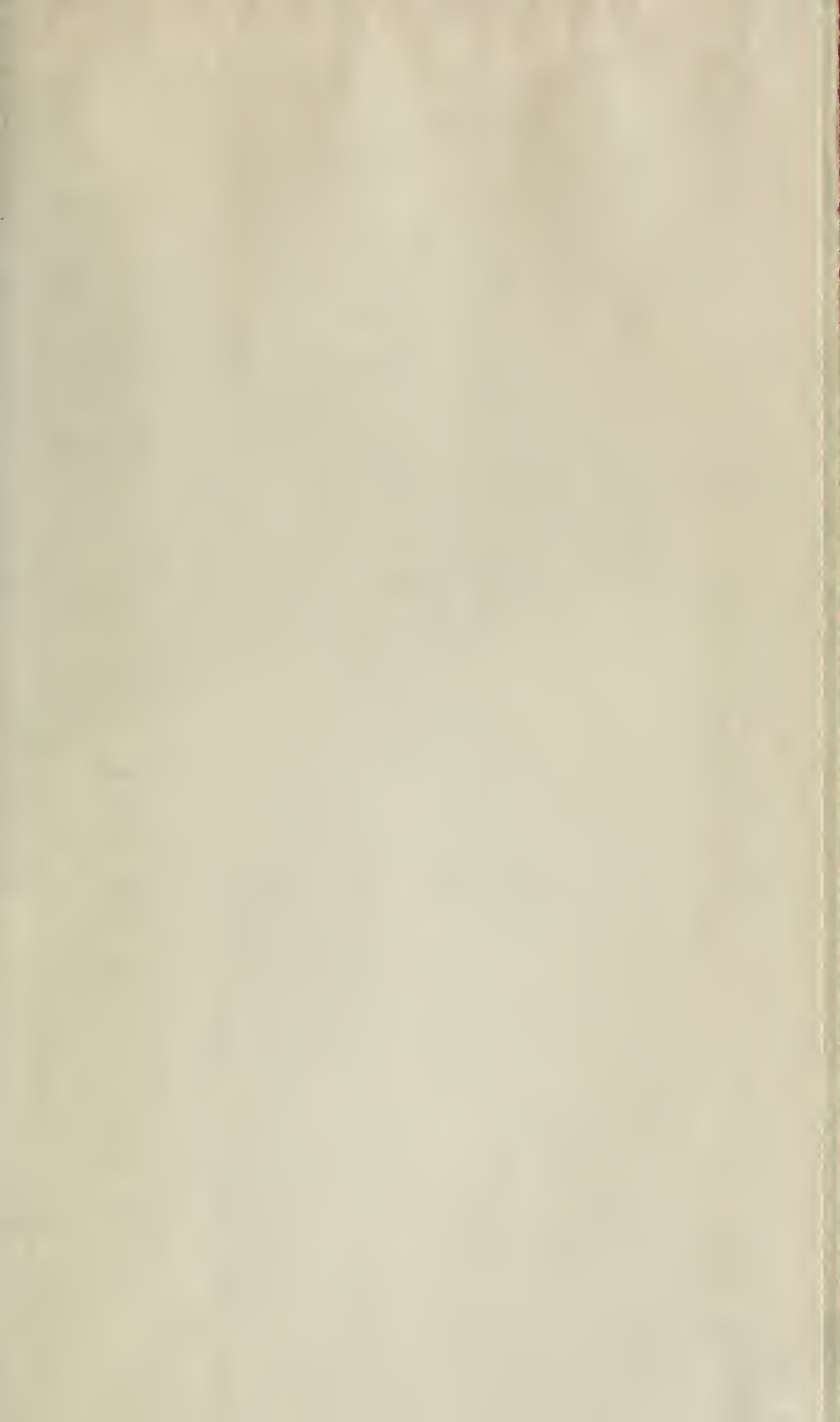
"Well, dear Dora," said Mr. Templemore, making her turn away, "you thought we did not want them—pray do they want us?"

"Perhaps they do, and perhaps they do not," saucily replied Dora; and to herself she thought with a bright, happy smile, "I do believe we are all going to be so happy!" But happiness is silent, not spoken; and not one word of this did Dora say.

THE END.







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